God of Hate

By: AkumaKami64

Eren does not become the Attack Titan, or any of the Nine Titans. He arises instead as the second coming of something far more powerful, from before the dawn of time: The One who is Many, the Golden Demise, the King of Terror, the God of Hate. But can he bare the weight of this power or be swallowed whole by a true Titan, by Ghidorah?

Status: ongoing

Published: 2020-10-31

Updated: 2023-09-26

Words: 126661

Chapters: 28

Rated: Fiction T - Language: English - Genre: Adventure/Suspense - Characters: King Ghidorah, Eren Y., Mikasa A. - Reviews: 932 - Favs: 1,982 - Follows: 2,164

Original source: https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13732907/1/God-of-Hate

Exported with the assistance of FicHub.net

God of Hate

Introduction
Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18
Chapter 19
Chapter 20
Chapter 21
Chapter 22
Chapter 23
Chapter 24
Chapter 25
Chapter 26

Chapter 27
Chapter 28

Chapter 1

God of Hate

Summary: Eren does not become the Attack Titan, or any of the Nine Titans. He arises instead as the second coming of something far more powerful, from before the dawn of time: The One who is Many, the Golden Demise, the King of Terror, the God of Hate. But can he bare the weight of this power or be swallowed whole by a true Titan, by Ghidorah?

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

[Eins/Right Head]

[[Zwei/Middle Head]]

[[[Drei/Left Head]]]

[[[[All Three]]]]

A soldier amongst Trost gritted his teeth as he zipped over streets, avoiding a ten meter titan chasing him. An Abnormal at that, running in an almost ape-like fashion with its legs and right arm, the left reaching up to him in hopes of snatching him out of the sky, its face possessing a large underbite.

'Dammit! Just got to make it to that clock tower and use it to get over a few buildings, put some distance between me and it,' he thought, forcing down the terror caused by his grinning predator.

He blinked in confusion as he zoomed past an intersection, a flash of gold out of the corner of his eyes and a great crash resonating behind him. He came to a stop, propped against a wall before looking back. His eyes dilated in fright at the sight; There was no titan there, but just passing the corner was the end of two very

large… he could only call them tails, both with spiked endings that reminded him of a mace.

"What the hell was that?" he whispered in fear, before he heard something like a laugh. He turned just in time to see the hand of a titan grabbing him.

The scene repeated. Soldiers facing or fleeing from titans suddenly found their foes vanished and vanquished. Most found only the rapidly vanishing corpses and skeletons of the titans, but some spotted… something else.

The tips of two tails, the golden blur, the slash of claws, a burst of blood.

Any that thought they saw a head to the entity only had one universal thought: Too many horns, too many teeth.

[Kill…]

[[Rip.]]

[[[Eat… !]]]

Those thoughts, those desires rushed through all of their minds as they sped through the streets, heads low. Eins snapped at a tiny titan, biting its head and neck off before it could even think to jump. Zwei growled as they leapt at a medium-sized one, knocking it over and ripping into it with their claws. Drei made one of their tails grasp the downed titan, squeezing around the neck as the sharp ends shredded the nape and back they were dragged over.

Titan after titan fell before their path, never to rise again. All the while, they never stopped moving, never stopped hunting, never stopped killing.

Though they thought differently, they were of one mind, one desire and one goal:

[[[[All of them! Every! Last! One!]]]]

A screech ripped through their mouths, bellowing for blood and death, to trample their enemies beneath their claws and leave nothing left!

Drei raised his neck, to glance over the rooftops, but spotted no more of the larger ones nearby.

Eins snapped impatiently for directions, for more prey, even as he head-butted a four meter titan into the air.

Zwei lurched at the tossed enemy, teeth ripping through skull and torso in one bite. Then he stopped themselves, physically.

They came to a halt and both sides looked to the middle, equally surprised. Eins was furious and Drei was curious.

Zwei raised his head high, almost as high as he could. The other two mimicked him and followed his searching gaze.

There, many streets away, were many humans sweeping across the air.

[[Humans]]

[[[Comrades!]]]

[Bait?]

Zwei and Drei gave Eins a disapproving look, but didn't deny the technical truth.

After all, they were of one mind:

[[[[Help them!]]]]

Turning a corner, they made sure their two tails smashed together, turning an approaching small titan's head into mincemeat.

Mikasa sat with a disturbingly peaceful and content air about her.

Despite having crashed into a roof.

Despite having ran out of gas.

Despite having a titan approaching her.

Despite that Eren was dead.

No, because of that one.

'It was a good life,' Mikasa thought in resignation, waiting for her end to come.

Or, so she thought. Against everything she was thinking and feeling, she sliced off the fingers of the titan and leapt away?

Why? Hadn't she already given up? Hadn't she lost all reason to live? So why keep struggling? Why keep getting up? Why keep… fighting?

'Fight!'

The thought, the memory echoed through her mind like the greatest epiphany.

She made to flee from the titans that would have eaten her, only to stop as she saw another titan blocking her escape route.

'I'm so sorry, Eren. I'm through giving up. I'll never give up again,' she thought as she steeled her nerves, clutching her blades with all her might. *'Because if I die, these memories of you die with me. That's why I'll do whatever it takes to win, whatever it takes to live!'* she mentally swore, letting loose a battle cry, prepared to fight no matter how hopeless it was!

What happened next was beyond confusing: an unearthly, screeching roar followed by the titan behind her tumbling over her

into the other one, leaving her spiraling on the ground.

She looked up and could not process the sight before her. It would have been less confusing if one titan had attacked another.

Standing over both titans was a mass of golden scales; at least as tall as a fifteen meter, maybe larger at full height. It had no arms, but possessed twin tails with spiked-clubs at the ends. Spiked was putting it lightly though, the many razor tips gleaming with ominous sharpness. And it had not one, not two, but three heads. Each was on very long necks, crowned with many horns.

It was like something out of a storybook, a reptilian beast with scales that shined in the sun, mightier than any titan.

And it wasn't just fighting the two titans. It was destroying them. Both titans flailed to get loose of the beast, but its necks wrapped around limbs to twist and break them, tails tore away flesh and bone, and fangs ripped them to shreds.

All the while, all six of its green eyes gleamed wrathfully down upon its victims.

It was as if it was Hatred itself, manifested in the flesh.

"Mikasa!"

She had barely registered the voice before Armin swept her off the ground, taking her atop one of the nearby buildings.

"Yo, are you two- what the fuckis that?!" Connie asked in alarm as he caught sight of the new, titan-killing monster.

Armin swallowed nervously as he took in the sight. He thought he had been imagining it at first, so focused on saving Mikasa. But the reality was right before him. "Is that… a dragon?" he asked in disbelief.

"A what?" Connie asked in confusion.

"Something I read about as a child. But… I thought they were a myth. Just stories people told before the titans appeared," Armin answered.

"Whatever it is, we need to get out of here," Connie stated warily.

"We can't, Mikasa's out of gas!" Armin answered, rushing over to her. "There's only one thing to do. I don't have much left, but-"

A sudden load, almost chirping noise made all three of them pause in fear, looking back to the creature.

The two titans were disappearing into steam beneath it, and all three heads now were staring down on them.

Armin swallowed, realizing this thing was easily twenty meters with its long necks. But… why wasn't it moving towards them? Why was it just staring?

[[[[Armin!]]]]

The sight of the blond human brought a shared relief upon all three of them, even if he did look incredibly scared.

Armin blinked, realized he was being stared at, before the gaze of all three shifted to the lone female of the trio.

[Mikasa…]

[[Mikasa.]]

[[[Mikasa!]]]

The two humans stared at them with incredible confusion as Drei expressed more joy while Zwei nodded firmly, relieved but ultimately feeling unsurprised by the female's survival. Eins only grunted in acknowledgement, to Drei's disapproval, earning a growl from Eins. Zwei hissed at both of them to end the matter.

"Are… is it having an argument with itself?" Connie asked slowly, feeling incredibly weirded out by the sight of three heads on one monster having some form of disagreement.

All three heads looked to the final soldier, who flinched under those green eyes.

[[[[Baldy.]]]]

The trio watched doubtfully as the great beast turned away and began to stalk away from them. "So it's… really going to ignore us?" Connie asked incredulously.

Mikasa and Armin shared a look. They wouldn't exactly call those reactions ignoring. Mikasa nodded to say she had the same thought as Armin. The creature almost seemed to recognize them. But how?

Questions for another time.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei all stared around the vast walls surrounding the city, searching for their target until they finally caught sight of its location.

[The Gate.]

[[The Breach.]]

[[[The Hole.]]]

Eins growled, Zwei scowled, and Drei grinned. This would never end as long as titans kept coming into the city, so killing them at the entrance would be the best way to stem the tide and the fastest way to kill more titans.

Drei suddenly perked up as he caught sight of the humans taking off again, dragging the attention of Zwei and Eins back to the tiny beings with concern in his head. Zwei scowled, realizing that Drei's sense of worry was warranted. There were three humans, but one was holding another. They couldn't all fly. The Mikasa was safe on

her own, the Armin was safe with the Mikasa, and the Mikasa was safer with the Armin.

Why did they want those humans safe? They didn't remember. However, even Eins didn't disagree with the feeling, this longing. But Zwei knew that the humans might not be safe if only one of the three could fight right now.

Still, while Eins stayed silent, his impatience for a decision was obvious by the rumble in his throat. To where humans gathered or the broken gate, it made no difference to him; Titans would be there for them to kill either way.

[[Breach is breached. Breach stay breached. Humans may die.]]

[[[Help more?]]]

[[Yes.]]

[For now.]

With that, the three headed dragon turned to follow after the trio of humans.

Who quickly took notice of their tag-along.

"Yo, guys?! Our new friend is on our ass!" Connie called out, glancing back with alarm. "Looks like your plan might work too well, Armin!"

Armin couldn't blame him, watching the golden beast racing down the streets and closing the distance was incredibly intimidating.

"Is it trying to come after us after all?" Mikasa asked with a scowl, looking back at the green eyed beast after slicing into the neck of a titan.

Said beast trampled over the corpse without hesitation or slowing down.

"If… If it wanted to kill us, it already would have!" Armin reasoned despite his concerns. "Just keep going! I think it just knows the titans will follow us!"

"I hope you're right, Ar-!" Connie started only to blink as the low-leaning beast was now directly under them, the eyes only briefly glancing at the humans before dashing forward past them. "-min. Shit, you were right," he finished, grinning as their unexpected ally rammed its way over a pack of ten and four meter titans, its fangs and tails a whirlwind of death. "Thanks a ton, Trips!"

Eins ripped out the nape of a titan just in time to glare at the nickname.

"Incredible," Mikasa stated, seeing the reptile power through the titans, seemingly on pure hatred and willpower, before attempting to catch up with them.

"Trips?" Armin asked with a skeptical brow.

"What? You got a better nickname for the three headed reptile-titan?" Connie asked with a smirk, looking up with a hope in his eyes. "There's the HQ- and it's covered in titans. Fuck!"

"I don't think that'll be a problem," Armin stated, just before the golden dragon raced by them.

Their leg muscles coiled and ready, the beast leapt high and let loose a great and echoing roar before two jaws bit into the necks of two titans that were peering into a hole in the building. They pulled the mindless humanoids down with a crash, their bites like a vice on the necks.

"Now's our chance!" Mikasa declared as they aimed to crash through the windows, the glass shattering as they braced themselves.

"Eh?! Mikasa?!" Jean called as the trio landed in front of him. "You're all alive?"

"Yes! We made it!" Connie declared as he sat Armin down, taking a moment to catch his breath. In morbid curiosity, he checked his gas, finding it essentially empty. "Any longer and we were done for."

"What happened? What was that… thing?" Jean asked in confusion, his fellow survivors looking on in amazement as what appeared to be three titan-sized snakes were outside the hole in the wall, glaring at some unseen foes.

"That's our new buddy, and he is going to have a lot of fun with those titans out there!" Connie stated loudly, grinning like crazy.

"What are you on about?" Jean asked with a scowl.

"I know it sounds crazy," Armin stated with a deep breath. "And I have no idea what it is, just… just that it's only interested in killing titans. Realistically, letting it deal with as many as possible is the best chance we have of survival."

"Use that… thing?" someone asked as murmurs of uncertainty were shared among them.

"What do you mean it? There's three of them," Jean pointed out, getting a chuckle from Connie.

"It has three heads," Mikasa filled in abruptly. "I don't care what it is, really. It had many chances to kill us, and even followed us here to kill more titans. If that is its desire, we should let it kill as it pleases here, for as long as it can."

"I'd say this is crazy, but…" Jean paused to look back at the beast. Two of its heads were gone, in the midst of battles by the sounds of it, but one head was still up and looking inside. If Jean was any crazier, he'd almost think there was concern in those eyes. "I suppose the enemy of my enemies is my friend applies here."

Drei watched for another moment, making sure no more titans were crawling on the building before turning his attention to their rear,

taking command of the tails to knock over a large titan at the legs, the other tail coming crushing down on the neck as soon as the titan landed face first. The first tail came down again, squishing an entire small titan.

More were coming. They weren't sure what was attracting them here more: Themselves or the humans. The titans were targeting them now though, rushing at their armless form without fear or plan, just their everlasting desire to kill and eat.

Titans only tried to eat humans. Zwei remembered that for them. Did that make them human?

Zwei scowled, coiling around a titan's neck, pinning it for Eins to finish off. They didn't look human, but they didn't remember what happened before this day. They knew the gate had been broken. And they knew these humans. Yet the humans didn't seem to know them.

They only had glimpses of memories. Drei remembered the humans for them, what they did remember of them. But they didn't recall humans being so small.

Or, more likely, they didn't recall being as tall as titans.

Eins confirmed that with wrathful certainty, recalling being much smaller than the titans, and that the nape was the kill-spot. That was important.

Thinking about humans made Drei concerned, sad almost as the Mikasa and the Armin flashed in their minds. It made Zwei uncertain, keenly aware of that they had forgotten some very important things. But it just made Eins angry to think that they were ever weaker than the titans.

[Humans safe. Gate now?]

[[No.]]

[[[Wait.]]]

[Why?]

Zwei snarled at Eins's impatience, eyeing the next wave of titans as he contemplated how to fight them next.

[[Humans stay, we stay.]]

[Not safe?]

[[Need time.]]

[For?]

Zwei didn't know, but Eins sensed the emotion. He didn't know what the humans needed to do to leave this place, just that they couldn't do it instantly.

Zwei looked down in shock as Drei came down to head-butt Eins, making the right head roar at the left.

[WHAT?!]

[[Stop!]]

But Drei just glared at Eins as they all felt something well up inside them. Something at the edge of their memories.

[[[Do you want them to die like Mother?!]]]

They flinched back, all three of them. Not from Drei's accusation, but from the memories.

The Memories of That Day.

A red, skinless face peek over the walls.

A rush of hurricane winds and the fall of debris.

A home destroyed.

A woman crushed.

A titan eating her.

They ignored the approaching titans even as the giants began to encircle them, hands reaching out and mouths open to bite. The three heads began to quake with unbridled hatred, their breathing becoming erratic as their eyes became unfocused and their pupils dilated.

Their scales almost seemed to glow for a second.

Just as the titans began to descend upon them, the three heads all reeled back.

And they screamed!

Long and thunderous, so great was the roar that every window in the immediate area began to crack and shatter. On and on it went, reverberating and echoing across Trost. All of the surrounding titans stopped to crouch and clutch their heads in foreign agony. Dull grunts and whines escaped their lips while blood and steam flowed from their ears.

It almost looked as though they were kneeling before the great dragon.

Kneeling, and waiting to be slaughtered.

Within the building, Armin and the others all shuddered as they descended in the elevator with rifles. "That has to be either really bad for us, or for the titans," Marco remarked, clutching his weapon harder.

"Just try to ignore it for now," Armin suggested, swallowing uncertainly. It wasn't a bad plan he had come up with, but if anything went wrong, if anyone else died…

Armin's eyes widened as the elevator reached their destination and they saw the room filling with smoke. No, not smoke, steam.

"You guys already killed all the titans?! How in hell?" Jean asked in shock.

"Armin, I am loving Trips more and more!" Connie declared with relief.

"They were all stunned by that roar!" Sasha exclaimed with a grin. "So we went for it!"

Armin scowled in confusion, glancing at the bodies. "It stunned them?"

"We had to make a judgement call," Annie explained as the elevator came all the way down. "All of them were just kneeling in pain, so we didn't believe we'd have a better opportunity."

Armin nodded as anticlimactic relief filled the room, the danger taken care of, but Armin couldn't help his brain from dwelling on this unexpected turn. *'The titans were stunned? But even if they're injured, titans recover almost instantly, and pain never stops all of them. So why now? Why would that roar affect them?'* Armin wondered, glancing upward to where humanity's strangest ally might be. *'Just what is that thing?'*

It didn't take long for the soldiers to resupply their gas tanks and decide it was best to leave as soon as possible, and return to the wall.

But something caught their attention.

"You guys seeing this?" Connie asked in surprise.

"Little hard to miss," Annie remarked as they saw the literal wall of steam arising from the other side of the building.

Thus, several of them couldn't help taking one detour: to venture to the top of the armory and see how the golden beast had faired against the titans.

The sight was etched into their memories, and would replay in their dreams.

Or nightmares.

This entire side of the armory's surrounding road was covered in the smoke of rapidly vanishing titan corpses. A huge plume of it came from the center, where a pile of titan bodies had been built. As if the bones were its throne, they could see the outline of the three headed monster in the smoke. With no more titans in the area, all three heads reared back to release a cackling roar out to Trost as a display of dominance and supremacy, the vibrations of the roar alone dispersing the steam to reveal its golden form once more.

"Not even a scratch on it," Reiner remarked in astonishment.

"I'm just glad that thing's on our side," Marco said with a nervous smile.

"For now," Annie remarked pessimistically.

"Yeah, you go Trips! You the boss!" Connie cheered, holding his hands to his mouth as if to amplify his voice.

"What he says! You rule, you beautiful scaly bastard!" Sasha cried out with a whoop of joy.

Each head looked back in confusion at the soldiers on the rooftop, especially the two very loud ones.

"Will you two shut up! You're going to make that thing want to attack humans just by annoying it!" Jean hissed.

"Oh come on, lighten up, Jean!" Connie retorted with a chuckle.

"Yeah, it's not like it can understand us, right?" Sasha asked rhetorically.

A very loud bang made them all look back to the creature in fright, seeing that it had snapped one of its tails down and broken several titan bones.

It looked less than pleased with the commentary.

"R-right?" Sasha repeated nervously.

The three heads stared a moment longer, the middle one flaring its nostrils before the creature turned away and began to walk off.

"Where's it going?" Connie wondered with a scowl.

"There are no more titans around here," Mikasa reminded, following the path of the golden creature. "It looks like it's heading to the breach."

"Does that mean it's leaving?" Armin wondered out loud.

"Who cares! For right now, we need to retreat behind the wall before more titans actually do show up," Jean reminded.

No one argued, taking off towards Wall Rose with their maneuver gear. Mercifully, there were very few titans, and they were able to avoid fighting any of them before ascending up the wall.

Many of them collapsed in relief, finally feeling safe for the first time since the battle began.

Connie decided to glance back out at the nightmare to see if he could catch a sight of Trips before it left the wall- only for his eyes to widen in amazement. "Oh, fuck, Trips is awesome!"

His exclamation drew his comrades attention as they looked back to the gap and squinted to make sure their eyes weren't deceiving them.

The beast had not left. Quite the opposite, it was actively fighting and killing Titans as they tried to enter the breach, ripping and crushing them with wild abandon.

"It's not trying to escape?" Mikasa stated with a confused frown.

Armin shared her sentiment. If it was just trying to kill Titans, it would just hunt down the nearest one. Despite the number it destroyed while they were refilling their gas, there were still dozens upon dozens across Trost. If it went to the gate, it would logically mean it was just trying to get out of the enclosed city now, but it wasn't. It was at the breach just to kill more titans. Combining that to its reactions to him, Mikasa, and the antics of Connie and Sasha? That was all pointing to one thing.

It was intelligent.

"You there, cadets!" a soldier, a short female with white hair called as she approached them. "Are you the last ones? Are there any wounded?" she asked with a scowl.

"Y-yes Ma'am, to our knowledge," Marco answered with a nod, looking to the rest of the group. "No wounded…"

But plenty of fatalities, it went unsaid. She returned the gesture. "All of you come with me; we need you to report on what you saw in regards to that creature."

"What, already? Can't we get a breather?" Connie complained to himself with a tired sigh.

Still, they dutifully followed after her, the occasional echo of a familiar roar meeting their ears.

End of Chapter

And tere we go, the first chapter of God of Hate, and my first AoT chapter in years- I fell out of love with the series until recently, but

recent chapters have reignite my interests. And here we are. For the record, this is MONSTERVERSE Ghidorah. Granted, I'm using some of the titles given to Anime Ghidorah, like Golden Demise.

Still, yes, I hope you enjoy what I affectionately call Minidorah. This isn't a comedy fic, for the record, it's just impossible to write three personalities like these conversing without it sound funny and/or terrfying.

Like Eren's titan shifting in canon, it'll eventually be revealed how Eren got this ability. As for why he's got a different personality in each head? This is actually canon to Monsterverse Ghidorah. However, each head IS Eren, just different aspects of him. Wht aspects are fairly obvious.

Eren as Minidorah is about 20 meters tall, but that's counting his really long necks, so foot to shoulder, he's smaller than a 15 meter. That said, he's a kaiju instead of a titan, which is important.

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 2

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

Eins was content, Zwei was weary and Drei was… bored, for lack of a better word.

True, all three of them took great satisfaction in snapping their jaws down on a Titan the instant it came through the hole in the wall, tearing the giant apart or shredding one already within the walls with their tails. But for Drei at least, it was rather dull and repetitive compared to hunting them down. Zwei was taking more note of the futility of it. They would have to tire eventually, well before they ran out of Titans to kill, and Titans came inside in groups sometimes. Eins would never admit that, but Zwei knew it was a reality. But the only way to stop the humanoids from venturing forth was to close the hole.

[[[And how are we suppose to do that, exactly?]]]

[We don't exactly have arms.]

[[Not anymore.]]

They all scowled at that before going back to their task.

The blur of rage and hate from before, with their memories swimming through their heads, had proven to them one thing if nothing else: they had definitely been human at some point before this. After all, Mother had been human, Father had been human. They vaguely recalled instances of being human themselves now, or they assumed that was what the memories of having arms meant. They even recalled Armin and Mikasa more clearly.

But the one thing that still alluded them was annoyingly important:

[[[[What is our name?]]]]

Zwei had briefly entertained Drei's idea that they had all been three different humans, but found that unlikely. All the memories were exactly the same, and there was never a fourth or fifth person with Armin and Mikasa. And they had definitely seen Mikasa and Armin earlier, so they weren't any two of their three heads.

How were they this creature now than? Why did they have three minds?

Unimportant in the immediate sense, but those were thoughts that were hard to drive away. More so because Zwei couldn't find a solution to their problem. If Titan bodies didn't disappear after being killed, they might be able to just clog the hole with corpses, but that wasn't an option for said reason. Filling the gap with the rubble from the gate would be hard without arms and tedious with even the desired limbs. The Titans would likely ruin any work before they finished regardless.

[[[The buildings?]]]

Eins bit onto the ankle of a large titan, bringing it down so that Zwei could eat the throat out, down to the back of the neck. Eins glanced back to the human constructs that made up the city.

[Maybe?]

[[Worth a try.]]

Elsewhere, Armin was giving his report to the captain, Kitz Woermann. "I've heard from your comrades that it was your idea to lead this… lizard-titan towards the armory, despite knowing your fellow soldiers would be there," the large, clearly stressed man stated firmly.

"Um, yes, sir," Armin answered uncertainly, knowing how crazy and careless that plan sounded out of context.

"Please explain to me how you came to the conclusion that this was a good idea, Cadet?" Kitz instructed promptly.

"Yes, Sir! After witnessing it attack and kill two titans with rapid efficiency, I realized that it could be used to our advantage. While I had some concerns about it attacking my comrades, I quickly found out that this was a very unlikely event," Armin explained, trying to keep the nervousness out of his voice.

"In what way?" Kitz asked skeptically.

"It looked directly at myself and two fellow cadets, Mikasa Ackerman and Connie Sanders. After a moment, it turned away and left to find more Titans to kill," Armin explained, pausing to see if the captain had anything to say. He didn't. "I thought if we led it to the armory, it would be able to keep the Titans outside busy until we had been able to refill our gas supplies. However, it seemed my plan wasn't really needed," Armin answered uncertainly.

"Hmm? I don't follow?" Kitz questioned with a frown.

"The plan was to lead it to the armory with drawing its attention to the Titans along the way, but it just… followed us without prompting, for some reason. I almost thought I had been wrong, that it might want to kill us after all, but it passed right by us. The heads were right next to and below us at one point, but it just rushed forward to kill more Titans in our way, Sir. It was… almost like it was trying to protect us," Armin explained carefully.

"You believe that thing wants to protect human lives, not just kill Titans?" Kitz asked doubtfully.

"I know it sounds crazy, but nothing else makes sense. It followed us to the armory, and didn't leave until after it saw that we were leaving, even after the Titans were all dead. Then last we saw, it headed to the gate and started killing every Titan that came in," Armin stated before scowling. "Sir, may I make an observation?"

"You may, Cadet," Kitz allowed with a frown of his own.

"I'm not sure that thing is a Titan at all," Armin stated, getting silence in response. "While it is similar in size to most, all knowns titans look human in terms of shape and design. This one is like a reptile with no arms, two tails, and three heads. Nothing even remotely similar to humans. As mentioned, it has no desire to harm humans, even seems to avoid it. I've also failed to see it injured, so I can't be certain it can even regenerate like a titan."

"What are you suggesting, Cadet Armin?" Kitz questioned with a scowl. "That we attempt to use this beast, trust it not to turn on us at a moment's notice?"

"I'm saying it's not a Titan, Sir. And…" Armin hesitated for a moment. This might be a bridge to far in terms of trying to convince this man. "I believe I and the others have witnessed it being capable of understanding human speech, Sir."

"…" Kitz didn't react to that claim, staring at the boy as if he was some form of foreign entity. "Cadet, do you understand how insane you sound?"

"Extremely, Sir. But my fellow cadets can verify most if not all the facts I've stated," Armin answered with a firm nod.

Kitz gritted his teeth, unwilling to budge on the idea. "Even if I was to consider that beast as anything but a new threat, I'd need some more proof than just the wishful thinking one as green as-!"

"Captain!" Rico exclaimed, rushing towards them. "Captain, you have to come see this!"

"What is it, Brzenska?!" Kitz demanded, looking both angry and worried by the interruption.

"It's that creature sir," Rico answered with a troubled scowl, making both men stiffen in concern. "I have no other words for it, but… it

looks like it's trying to seal the breach."

"What!?" Armin and Kitz said in shock.

"It's been using its heads to try and tear the roofs and floors off buildings before trying to pile them into the hole," Rico explained, frowning with a bead of sweat running down his face. "It's not going well. It manages to get enough wreckage to block the Titans for a moment, but they'll push through the moment it stops holding it, or when the wood gives out."

"… I need to see this for myself," Kitz stated with wide eyes, looking to Armin. "Cadet Artlert, do not speak a word of this to anyone yet."

"Yes sir," Armin acknowledged, distracted by the imagery of a dragon fruitlessly trying to hold back the Titans with a thin barricade of wood.

[[[[Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!]]]]

All three of them cursed as they pressed their body against the makeshift, ever more fractured pile of wood getting slammed by four, no, now six titans! And said defense made it near impossible to actually get close and kill the titans without ruining their work, leaving them only able to bite off arms trying to get through the gaps.

[[Still too dull for you!?]]

[[[I didn't mean it like that, dammit!]]]

[Shut up and bite them!]

A fifteen meter Titan shot its arm completely through the debris, to their shared displeasure. Drei bit the hand of the Titan and pushed it back through, to the confusion of Eins. But confusion turned to approval as Drei went through the hole and began to bite and tear at every Titan he could reach.

Unfortunately, due to the angle, he couldn't get to the two small ones just below the hole in the makeshift seal. Both leaped up to grab on

and bite Drei's neck. The left most head screeched in pain, reeling back and pulling the titans with him, which Eins quickly ripped away. The small, shallow wounds only bled for a few seconds with black, oily blood before rapidly healing over.

[[[[This isn't working.]]]]

That was the shared thought even as Eins stubborn grabbed the piece of a wall they had thrown nearby, pressing it against the hole. If he had time, it might be possible. Twenty, even just ten minutes, he could probably force enough wood in there to maybe, just maybe make it too packed for the Titans to just force their way through. Maybe give the humans enough time to seal the breach more permanently. But as it was, the Titans would just keep ruining their work without realizing it.

[[We killed a lot in the city.]]

[[[Should we leave?]]]

[We'll kill more out there, keep them from getting into the city.]

[[[Could we kill enough?]]]

[Yes!]

[[No.]]

[We could!]

[[We'll tire out, we've been over this.]]

[We can't stop them from getting in like this!]

[[[We can't kill them all if we're dead from being stupid!]]]

[We don't have any other choice!]

[[[Of course we do! You just don't care if it doesn't involve killing titans!]]]

[You're the one who said it! They killed Mother!]

[[[And what about Mikasa?! What about Armin!?]]]

[[Enough!]]

Zwei screeched at both of them, headbutting Drei and biting of one of Ein's horns to slap him against the wall. Both heads looked to the center one, their feet and body weight keeping the barricade in place for now.

[[[[Is this what I'm like all the time?]]]]

That sobering thought quieted them all as they returned to holding the makeshift barricade in place. They were out of options. They could keep fighting, they would keep fighting. Because they wouldn't lose until they died.

[[If we died, we die free.]]

Eins and Drei watched in surprise as the supposed brains of their trio slammed himself head first through the wood, biting the face off a Titan and sending it reeling back. Still, they quickly joined in, tearing apart the top of the barricade, ready to use the bottom to keep the titans at bay while they took down as many as they could. As many as they had to, before they could get out of-

"Hey."

That stopped their plan rather prompt, the three heads glancing up to see a small group of soldiers hanging down from the wall on the maneuver gear, just half way down and only barely out of range of them. The three heads eyed them. Eins suspiciously, Zwei cautiously, and Drei curiously.

[[[[Are they going to attack us?]]]]

A rather troubling idea, if the very side they were fighting for thought they were an enemy. Still, all the same, Eins and Drei returned to keep hold of the compromised wall of wood, while Zwei watched the soldiers with a studying look.

The man that had called down to them was large in build and had brown hair with a mustache and beard. His eyes were sunken in, covered with worry and despair as his blades trembled in his hands.

"I don't know what you are. Or where you came from," Kitz stated warily. "The idea of trusting something like you seems insane."

Zwei tilted his head with narrowed eyes, making the captain flinch.

"But I can deny this no longer. You're clearly not just trying to kill the titans. You're trying to stop them. You're trying to save this city," Kitz admitted begrudgingly before taking a deep breath, and letting loose a wild and inquiring yell. "So for the love of the Walls, give me a sign here! Are you intelligent?! Can you understand me?!"

Zwei's eyes widened, however minutely, and the soldiers all tensed to see what would happened.

But Zwei only had one possible way of answering: He nodded. Slowly, deliberately, and repeatedly.

"By Sina, it can," Kitz whispered, feeling almost lightheaded from how unreal this situation was. "Then… then tell me! Do you really believe this plan of yours is going to work?"

Eins growled from his position, the wood buckling against him. Zwei looked down at the failed attempt to seal the breach with a snarl, but it left while looking up to the captain with a shake of the head.

"No way that's a coincidence now," Kitz said in resignation. "As much as I hate the idea of letting more of those monsters in, it can't be helped," he admitted bitterly, "I need you to fall back to the wall. We're trying to come up with a plan for you to help us close this

damn hole. But we can't do that if you're taken out by these damn Titans! Understand?!'

It was surreal to Kitz, staring down at the great golden creature that was holding back the horde of Titans, their arms reaching through to try and grab the beast.

Drei was the first to howl his agreement, Eins grunting in acceptance afterward. Zwei glanced back at the wall. More accurately, the top of the walls, where the cannons were. Was this a trap? Still, Zwei looked back to the human overhead and nodded. If humans wanted to attack them, let it never be said the three of them struck first. With that in mind, he jabbed his head to the side, motioning for the soldiers to get out of here.

"That I understood," Kitz accepted as he and the other humans retreated back up the wall.

"Sir, are you sure about this?" Rico asked as they headed back to Wall Rose.

"Not even slightly," Kitz remarked with gritted teeth. "But there is only so much evidence I can ignore before even my paranoia doesn't make sense."

Rico nodded in understanding, glancing back at the three-headed beast. She went wide eyed as she saw it jump back, spinning around to slam its tail against the barricade just before it gave way, sending wood and Titans flying out of the breach. With that, it started to retreat. Taking the most Titan-rich path, true, but a retreat nonetheless.

"He's finally here," Kitz said, drawing his second's attention back to Wall Rose. Above the wall was a man waiting for them.

"Isn't that… Commander Pixis?" Rico asked with squinted eyes as the bald man's appearance became clearer and clearer.

It was indeed Commander Pixis, the Captain and his group saluting the man even as he took a drink from his flask. "Welcome to Trost, Commander," Kitz greeted, almost automatically.

"Well, I must say I'm surprised, Captain Woermann. I always thought you were too skittish to attempt something like that," Pixis returned with a curious stare. "I've been apprised of the basics, and can see the validity of them as plain as day from here; A beast, the size of a Titan yet it bares no similarity to them in any part of its appearance. It kills Titans, rather well at that, and even seems to want to protect humans."

"I thought the idea ludicrous myself sir, but… seeing it trying to erect a barrier, attempting to close the breach was too much to ignore, even for me," Kitz admitted reluctantly. "Admittedly, I'm not sure how to make use of that thing just yet."

"Any creature can destroy, some can create modestly, but attempting to fix something? If I had to make a standard for intelligence, that would be one," Pixis remarked in a chuckle before turning serious in an instant. "Tell me, Captain. That this creature might be an ally, who exactly gave you that idea?"

Even with all their hunting and holding the Titans back, there were still many in Trost. Too many for the humans. Mostly smaller ones at this points, the ones that had been fortunate enough to not be noticed on his mass killing-spree on the Titans.

Unfortunately, the small ones had a habit of jumping.

Drei shook his head wildly as a Titan landed just behind his horns, nibbling on his neck, before Zwei took the liberty of biting the pest off. Meanwhile, Eins growled as he flung a titan off one of their tails. Despite the spiked ends turning the humanoid into meat swiss cheese, it had somehow not done enough damage to the nape to kill the Titan.

[[[[We are definitely human.]]]]

That shared thought stemmed from the fact that Titans indeed were coming at them without being provoked. Normally the mindless creatures just tried to gobble up the nearest human they were aware of, but now there were coming after him if they got close enough. And Titans only attacked humans, Zwei remembered that distinctly among the reasons they hated Titans.

[[[Can we change back?]]]

[[Possible.]]

[Do we want to?]

[[[Of course we do!]]]

[[Why wouldn't we?]]

[What if we can't do this again?]

[[True. But communicating with humans like this is hard.]]

Eins grunted at the validity of that issue, glancing up to the top of the wall. They were at Rose proper now instead of the curving walls of the city. How long would it take them to come up with a plan? How long before they tired out?

Zwei didn't speculate. Which was just as well, Eins likely wouldn't accept any answer as the reality of their limitations.

[[[How do we get out?]]]

[[Hm?]]

[[[If we seal the gate. How do we get out?]]]

[We don't.]

Zwei nodded at Eins's seething admittance. The only thing they hated more than not being able to kill Titans was the thought of them

taking even one more small chunk of mankind's land, pushing them even a little further into a corner.

They'd deal with the consequences afterwards.

The zip of cable lines and hissing of pressurized air drew the their attention.

"Well, you're not lady, but you're a beauty in your own way."

All three heads stared. They weren't surprised to see another human talking to them after last time, but they were a bit taken back by the old man casually drinking on the rooftop next to them.

"I suppose I should thank you for clearing out so many of the ugly bastards before I got here," Pixis acknowledged, his smile vanishing rather quickly. "I'll make this quick. I am the Commander of the humans here. You understand? Good. I can see you want to help. Much as I hate to have you running all over town, I need you to head back towards the gate."

Eins was annoyed, but Zwei and Drei were just curious.

"There is a boulder along the east side, close to the wall. I know you don't have arms, but you're a big bastard with more heads than you probably need. I don't want you to move it to the gate just yet. But we need to see if you're capable of moving it at all. If you can, we'll protect you while you move it. Will you do that?" Pixis asked, as if he were addressing an ordinary soldier.

Pixis didn't know it, but Zwei suspected that was in fact true.

All three of them nodded in unison, but didn't move, Drei nodding upwards. Pixis blinked before smiling. "What a polite fellow, seeing an old man like me off before leaving," Pixis complimented before he took off, knowing he had already risked enough coming down here.

"Commander Pixis, may I say that was incredibly unwise and unnecessary of a risk?" Anka, one of his aides, said stoically as the Commander rejoined them.

"Perhaps, but I can hardly call myself a Commander if I don't have the courage to look a possible ally in the eye and ask him in person to aid us," Pixis stated in amusement, looking back down into the city as he watched the golden beast run down the streets, only stopping occasionally to search for the boulder. "Quite a curious one, to entrust our hopes to."

End of Chapter

And there's the second chapter. Thanks to Eren as Minidorah being tougher than a Titan, Shifter or not, nobody knows he's human yet! However, being in control of himself allowed him to get creative in trying to save Trost. Which was enough to convince even the captain that wanted to blow Eren up in canon. While humans tend to fear what they don't understand, its hard to not notice when that unknown is activelly helping you against an dangerous enemy.

Oh, and if anyone is wondering why a titan was able to bite though his scales even a little? Everything is shrunk, even Ghidorah's durability. He's still a LOT tankier than a titan though.

Now, will Eren get full Ghidorah powers, including wings, height, and gravity-beams?… Yes, I'm surprised this was even a question. But Eren will have to wait for those.

Will other Kaiju appear? Yes. Monsterverse creatures are a definite, might slip in some others as well.

That's it for now. Hope you all enjoyed this! Happy Thanksgiving!

Chapter 3

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

Titans had long pushed through the barricade, tumbling over each other without thought or regard for one another.

Something that Eins, Zwei, and Drei regarded with some minor amusement. At least their efforts made it problematic for the Titans, until the giants managed to accidentally unclog their traffic problem.

Turning their attention downward, they stared at the large boulder that they had finally found. Just judging by its height relative to themselves, it should be big enough to seal the breach if it could be moved and lodged into the gate.

It was too great a task for the humans to do with their own hands.

Unfortunately, their three headed body continued to not possess hands.

Drei, more to rule it out than really thinking it would work, leaned down to press his neck against it, hoping his scales would be enough to grip it. Zwei quickly deemed that a pointless exercise. Even if their necks had that kind of muscle, their body was too smooth for this, the boulder would slip through in no time.

Eins was looking back at their tails, eyeing the spikes with annoyance. If they knew to retract or fold the spikes, maybe they would be of better help.

Zwei hummed, turning them around to wrap their tails around the bottom of the stone. They were a bit more flexible than the necks, perhaps they could wrap around its base and allow them to drag or tilt it.

Eins growled in frustration when it refused to budge, and Drei was in a similar temperament.

[What is with this damn boulder!?]

[[[Why won't it move?!]]]

[[It's stuck.]]

[Obviously.]

[[I mean in the ground. Its weight pressed the ground down over time.]]

[[[Meaning?]]]

[[It'll get easier once we get it out of the hole.]]

[[[[Now we just need to figure out how.]]]]

"Do you still think this'll work, Commander?" Gustav asked as they watched the golden creature's attempts while Titans steadily trickled back into the city once more.

"Honestly, I'm not discouraged. The lad has to feel out the problem before he can make it work for him. He likely has the muscle to do the job, but not having arms or anything similar does complicate the issue," Pixis remarked, before turning to give them a wry look. "Besides, it's actually doing what we requested it do. Even if it fails, this discovery is the first great boon humanity has received in a century."

His aides accepted his judgement at that.

"Commander Pixis!" Rico Brzenska called as she approached, saluting him as he turned to face her, the boy behind her doing the same. "This is the cadet you requested, Sir."

"Ahh, Armin Arlert, just the soldier I wanted to see. Thank you, Squad Leader," Pixis said, nodding to them both, Rico departing afterwards.

"You wanted to speak me, Sir?" Armin asked nervously, glancing out to the city, eyes widening as he caught the golden creature. "Is that…?"

Pixis nodded in agreement. "We've confirmed the creature does indeed possess intelligence, the capacity to understand our language, and an apparent desire to protect humanity. It's currently attempting to move the boulder at my request," Pixis confirmed in summary. "I'm told that you played a part in convincing Captain Woermann of this golden fella's value to us and recognized him as a non-enemy from your first encounter."

Armin nodded meekly. "Yes, Sir. But I don't think I would put it like that. It was a rather obvious conclusion with all the facts."

"Be that as it may, I had a hunch," Pixis remarked craftily.

"A hunch, Sir?" Armin repeated in confusion.

"Tell me, Cadet, what do you see?" Pixis asked, motioning to the city.

Armin remained uncertain, but looked out all the same, his face settling into one of deep concentration. "Even if it moves the boulder, the Titans will still attack it. Unless it has more abilities we're not aware of, the dragon can't reasonably move the boulder and defend itself. At least not effectively if the numbers get too big. I'm sure you've already thought of that and plan to rally the troops to protect it as it moves the boulder. Even if the mission succeeds, it would lead to an extremely high casualty count, even ignoring our current loses."

Anka and Gustav looked mildly impressed with the young soldier's deduction of the situation, Pixis smirking at his hunch being confirmed.

"And how, exactly, would you propose reducing casualties without harming the mission's success?" Pixis prompted.

Armin looked surprised by the question, but steeled himself all the same. "I'm…" he took a quick breath, "The main issue is Titans will eventually surround it, gang up all at once…"

Meanwhile, Zwei had firmly ruled out pushing it with their legs, as it was just impractical, and also using their horned heads to push the rock as it was just too stuck in the ground. While it might work once they got it moving, right now, they only succeeded in making scratches with the horns.

That just left one option.

[[[[I really, really hope no one is hiding in any of these houses.]]]]

With that in mind, they turned and made a quick retreat from the boulder.

"Is he giving up after all?" Pixis asked in disappointment.

"No, I… I don't think so," Armin remarked, squinting as he saw the dragon abruptly turn around and pause-

Then it ran; it ran so fast it kicked up pavement, lurching forward to the rock. Then, with one great leap forward, it turned to slam its side into the boulder.

The great, spherical rock dislodged itself and sped forward half a block, crushing itself halfway into a building towards the wall.

Drei gave a little victory screech while Eins just sagged, glad that tedious task was done yet a bit dazed from the impact being on his side of the body. Zwei took the lead, bringing them over to the boulder and began to attempt moving it again. It wasn't easy by any

means. The shape wasn't a perfect ball-shape, and it weighed a lot. But they could roll it at the least.

They turned and gave a great roar to the wall.

"He did it!" Armin cheered in relief.

"Good, now all I need to do is convince the soldiers to help defend our unexpected ally," Pixis remarked with a chuckle, turning to do just that.

"Umm, Commander? I think you might want to do that quickly!" Armin alerted, drawing their attention back to the golden beast, who was continuing to roll the boulder.

"Commander, didn't you tell that thing to pull back?" Anka asked with a scowl. "Are you sure it understood?"

"I don't think this is a miscommunication, but a judgement call," Pixis said with a scowl of his own. "He just got that boulder out of one hole, but he might have thought it would make another."

Armin's eyes widened in understanding as the commander left. *'Of course! We've been assuming this thing would be aware of something even the average human wouldn't know for sure. The road should hold without caving in under the boulder, but most people wouldn't be able to tell that if the stonework is cracking beneath it!'* he thought as he watched the Titans around half of Trost tread in the direction of the dragon.

Zwei growled to himself in frustration as they used their heads and occasionally a knee to roll the boulder forth, the stonework of the road giving less than assuring sounds under the strain. If the boulder caused itself to collapse into anything worse than what the stone had already been in, he wasn't sure if they'd be able to ram it out again so easily.

But it wasn't a short walk to the breach; over five kilometers, with an increasing number of Titans in the path.

As much as endangering humans didn't appeal to them, it would pragmatically have been much better to wait for the soldiers to come and help them. But in the moment, they made a judgement call based on what was happening.

Besides, something was nagging at the back of their minds.

[[[[Where is he?]]]]

[The Bastard!]

[[The Armored Titan.]

[[[That Asshole.]]]

None of them were sure how well they would fair against that particular enemy. Even Eins conceded that, but he still wanted to find out. Could their teeth rip through armor that cannons couldn't pierce? Was their body strong enough to go head on against it?

All these questions festered behind the all-important one of why it hadn't shown up yet? They weren't sure how long this battle had gone on for, but it felt longer than… *That Day.*

They were pulled out of their thoughts as the boulder suddenly started to resist their efforts. Eins roared, biting at a ten meter Titan trying to push through the gap between the rock and the buildings to get to the golden beast. Zwei looked up and cursed to himself. There were a lot of Titans in front of them- and a couple smaller ones below them, crushed by the boulder. Drei made sure to start attacking the five to their rear, having wandered around a corner they had passed, the two tails crushing and shredding them as they came.

[[[[This could get ugly.]]]]

"ATTENTION!"

The soldiers of Trost, all terrified and on the verge of mass desertion, came to a silence at the booming voice of Dot Pixis.

"Take note, the Trost Recovery Operation has begun!" Pixis announced, surprising and confusing many. "The primary objective of this operation is to reseal the hole. Yes, you heard correctly. What's more is that it is being done manually!"

The confusion grew amongst the crowd. Everyone had pulled back; there were no more soldiers in Trost, right? So who was doing this? And reseal the gate, manually? Impossible!

"I'm sure by now many of you have heard or even seen the rumored beast now roaming Trost: a golden monster with three heads, slaughtering Titans left and right. Allow me to put all doubts to rest. This creature is real! And, furthermore, is intelligent. Hard as it is to believe, this beast can understand humanity's tongue! I have witnessed this myself, as well as its active attempts to not only kill the Titans, but seal the breach!"

The crowd grew restless. How could they not? Were they supposed to believe something like that?

"Recall the massive boulder roughly a league from the gate. This creature is already in the midst of moving the boulder to schlep it into the breach, in spite of the risk to itself as Titans will inevitably swarm it. This is where you all come in. Your job will be to defend him! Yes, defend a new giant monster from our mutual enemies, the Titans!"

Now the soldiers were beginning to break, some already turning to desert, with others attempting to stop or punish them.

"Anyone wishing to leave, shall by my order, not be charged with treason!" Pixis declared firmly, shocking everyone. "Those who have seen a Titan first hand will not be expected to revisit such horror again. Whoever this applies to, you may leave with my blessing. I only ask one thing before you depart!"

That made many of them stop, wondering just what the commander would ask of them in exchange for pardoning their treachery and so-called cowardice.

"All that I ask is that you come up here and take one last look at the battlefield before making your decision."

There was a tension among the army, deserter and otherwise. But human curiosity was a powerful thing. Four soldiers bit the bullet, using their maneuver gear to scale Wall Rose. Everyone waited for their return, but there was none. Two more went, then five and then another three. More and more until close to a hundred soldiers had ascended the wall.

Each of them found their comrades, alive and well, but staring in disbelief.

And they quickly joined them.

Even from this far away, they could see it.

The Dragon pushed the great boulder forward, trying to hold off a dozen Titans even with itself so preoccupied. Four large ones were trying to reach over the boulder, and one of them had grasped the horns on the left head, allowing another to also grab it. Even two Titans weren't strong enough to wretch the long neck forward, but it allowed another one the chance to bite at the neck. The head roared, the Titan's teeth gnawing on its scales as relatively small amounts of a black liquid bled from the golden beast.

The dragon pushed forward, taking care to step on a four meter Titan trying to grab its leg. Its right head reached out, snapping its jaws onto a ten meter Titan that had gotten on the roof next to him. It yanked the Titan off, barreling it into the crowd in front of the boulder, freeing the other head and allowing it to slam its neck against the building and dislodge the biting Titan. The wounded head quickly and angrily bit out the nape of its former attacker.

Seven Titans of varying size were to its rear, its tails flailing randomly and wildly, none of the three heads able to dedicate the focus to direct the tails to be more lethal. Titans were knocked over, shredded and amputated, but most just regenerated the damage and continued their attack without pause. Two had already made it beyond the tails, fallen over and trying to nibble and gnaw on the backside while the heads were too busy.

With every minute, more black and oily blood tarnished its golden form. Yet, it kept moving forward.

Realistically, nothing had changed for the soldiers on the wall. They still didn't want to die here to the Titans. They still didn't want to trust this unknown creature with their lives. They still wanted to run.

Many shook, turning as if in a desire to leave.

But…

"Mankind has never been closer to its first victory against the Titans!" Pixis continued, his voice carrying over all of them, be they below or on the wall. "And it has not even been by our own blood and tears, but on the back of an unexpected ally. Whether it succeeds or fails, we will have already lost if it does so alone. If we must die, let it be without regret! Let it be knowing that when an ally with the power to stand against the Titans emerged in this cruel world, we did not turn tail as it fought for us!"

Sometimes, when people see someone fighting twice as hard as anyone else for a shared cause, it was hard not to feel inspired… to feel the urge to aide them. Even if it was someone they didn't trust; or, sometimes, especially so.

Connie and Sasha frowned as they recalled this morning. Everyone telling Eren how they were going to join the Scouts, after that little graduation speech he gave. Now Eren and most of the rest from the memory were dead…

The two cadets, deemed the most comical of the 104th, shared a look as if reading one another's mind. They had some comrades to avenge, to make this day worthy of their sacrifices.

Zwei was very glad for how tough their hide was. For all the biting the titans were managing to do, most of their wounds were only surface level. Almost like papercuts. Unfortunately, those papercuts were adding up, namely from the ones they hadn't been able to dislodge pecking away at his flesh. It was like they were scrapping away at ice, but being ice in that situation hurt like hell!

Fortunately, pain can fuel anger and hate, and they were essentially running on those now. Eins was almost silent besides his roars for blood and death, while Zwei had completely tuned him and Drei out, the third head doing damage control where he could, pushing things along almost mindlessly between kills.

They were almost half way there now. Just a bit further and he could turn his full attention to slaughtering these senseless creatures.

Or as many as they-

The Titans fell from his backside, dead.

[What?!]

[[Who!?]]

[[[How and Hell?!]]]

All three of them noticed a human soldier blur through the air from their backside, flying over the building to their left… a human with black hair and a flash of red.

[[[[MIKASA!?]]]]

"Yo, Trips! Hang in there, the backup has arrived!" Connie called down, zooming over the bolder and distracting three Titans who tried to follow after him for now.

[[[Baldie?]]]

[[Connie.]]

[Why are they all HERE!?]

Drei resisted the urge to enjoy that Eins's anger sounded more concerned than upset, but he was too busy taking stock of the situation, watching as humans charged through the air.

As was someone else.

Armin gritted his teeth, trying to think this situation through. The plan was simple, but its effectiveness was limited now. There were three teams. One group was busy distracting and luring Titans away from the dragon and its path, leading them to the walls. But at least half the Titans left in Trost were already starting to gather and clump up in groups within one-to-two blocks of the three headed beast.

That was where the second, largest group came in: their job was to do the same, lead the titans away, but unlike the first group, they were to engage with the Titans and try to keep as many from their new ally as possible.

The final team, the most elite veterans and skilled members of the 104th were deployed with the express role of aiding the dragon directly, be it killing the Titans that managed to get on it or just distract them to give the dragon a chance to kill the Titan in question.

All the while said beast was trying to keep the boulder moving.

But with Titans, no plan went perfectly.

'Dammit! Commander Pixis was right, retreating definitely isn't an option now. It's already injured and there's no telling if it could survive taking on that many Titans at once, even without being preoccupied with the boulder. But people are dropping like flies because of how close the Titans are all together. If only we had a-'

Armin blinked as he remembered the armory and the Titans being stunned. *'It hasn't used that roar again. Could Sasha be right…?'*

Zwei was happy to say that he could hear Eins and Drei again and that the bleeding felt like it had stopped already. But he wasn't sure how manageable this situation really was. True, the humans were relieving a lot of pressure. Yet, the soldiers were falling left and right to Titan jaws. And it was pissing them off, even- no, especially Drei as the humans died while they themselves were forced to do nothing to stop the slaughter, only able to keep pushing the rock forward.

And all the while, their hatred burned in their throats, all three of them.

"Hey!"

There was an instant, when time seemed to slow before they looked to their left. There, they spotted Armin, looking up at them with a glare that didn't reach his eyes.

End of Chapter

Okay, there we go! And I'm officially rumbling canon, lol. Nobody knows Eren is human, Eren did the boulder thing early for valid reasons but with mixed results. This is still AoT, not everything is going to go Eren's way.

I'm sure the ending with the soldiers being rallied by the sight of Minidorah's desperate, determined march was a bit corny, but I liked the imagery and I feel it works. Minidorah clearly isn't a titan, and they can SEE him trying to close the breach. There's also them realizing in canon that their families will all die if Wall Rose falls, but they have a clear and better hope from this.

Hope you are all enjoying this, the final manga chapters, and the start of the Final Season.

Next chapter, we find out what Armin is planning.

Stay safe everyone. Lot of people in my family got Covid. No one in my household, but the ones that got it, some got it bad.

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 4

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

A rumble went through the building as the cadets busied themselves with filling their gas tanks, some giving uneasy or grinning faces at the sounds of a destructive battle that was hopefully going in the favor of their golden savior.

"So, should we be at all worried about Trips?" Connie asked curiously. "As helpful as that roar was, it sounded kind of bad."

"Don't you know the rule? Don't name it, you'll get too attached!" Jean scolded, just a tad annoyed by the overeager desire to call that creature an ally of humanity. He was a pessimist, after all. Why would something like that have any care or regard for humans?

"Hehe, I don't think we'll have to worry about that," Sasha said with a strained grin.

"Hmm? Do you know something about this, Sasha?" Reiner asked with a raised eyebrow.

"About giant golden reptiles? No, no I do not. But I do know roars," Sasha assured, confident yet uneasy. "I know death-throes roars. I know mating roars. I know roars of animals fighting over a mate. I even know roars of wolf pups trying to imitate their parents."

"There is a story to some of those," Connie observed. "And I… don't want to know."

"And what kind of roar was this?" Mikasa questioned.

"You look a bit nervous," Armin pointed out, listing intently.

"Oh, it's just, that roar? That was basically one massive **"I Hate You!"** *to all the Titans," Sasha explained, scratching her cheek. "Last thing you want being what something like that hates."*

End of Flashback

'If that's true, then anger isn't enough. So what triggered it last time?' Armin thought with a determined look as he stared up at the massive golden creature. *'This thing hates Titans, but that isn't just it, is it?'* Armin's thought ran back to Eren's death, and further back to hearing Eren's account of his mother being eaten. *'That's right. It's intelligent. It has emotions. And for intelligent creatures, what we hate more than people or Titans are their actions. And this thing has been trying to save humans lives, so…'*

"Is that Armin?!" Connie called over the wind, seeing his blonde friend glaring up at the green eyed beast.

"What is he thinking now?" Ymir grunted in annoyance.

Mikasa, slaying another Titan, merely watched Armin with mild concern. She was sure he had a plan, Armin always did. But with so many Titans around, it was hard not to worry.

"You… you get it, right?!" Armin called out, forcing his voice to sound like it was trembling in anger. "The road was never going to break!"

"The fuck is he yelling about?" Jean muttered with a scowl, dodging out of a grasp of a fifteen meter.

And noticing that every muscle and scale on their new "ally" was tense, coiling all over as it stared intently at Armin.

"There was never any risk of it collapsing under the boulder!" Armin continued to spit rage forth from his mouth as the dragon's form before to tremble, beginning to bare its mighty teeth.

"Umm, guys?! I don't know what Armin's trying to do, but I think Trips is getting pissed!" Sasha pointed out in worry.

"No, what gave it away, that murder glare it's giving Armin or the snarling fangs that are bigger than our swords?!" Ymir yelled.

"Cadet Arlert! Whatever you're doing, cease and move away from the creature!" Rico yelled, glaring at the pack of Titans beginning to build up in front of the bolder.

"Everyone, right now, is dying trying to help you, to protect you!" Armin continued breathing hard from the yelling and trying to sell the act.

"Armin! We get it you're pissed, but knock it off before it knocks ***you*** out of Rose!" Connie called urgently.

"Cadet, that's an order!" Rico called, using her gear to head to his location.

"Trying to clean up your mess because ***you*** couldn't wait another damn min-!" Armin froze as Rico landed next to him.

But not from her arrival.

Now, they were both staring up with growing dread and fear as they heard a new, different noise.

A rattling noise.

The twin tails of the gold beast shook like a snake's, the spikes beating against each other and the center point of the tail. His green eyes were dilated in unholy rage, his entire body and all three heads reared up to accent the intimidation factor.

But the important thing everyone noticed, was that every Titan in the immediate area stopped whatever they were doing and looked in the direction of the noise.

"Cadet Arlert…?" Rico whispered, as the reptile inhaled suddenly.

"EVERYONE! COVER YOUR EARS!" Armin screamed out to the battlefield.

It was just in time.

All three heads looked towards the sky and from their mouths came a long, screeching, screaming roar. It was like a thunder that would not end, creeping further and further past the pitiful barriers of their hands and seeking to destroy their eardrums. THe roar of each head echoing and amplifying the other two.

But to the stupefied amazement of every soldier, the Titans all appeared to scream in pain as they grasped their own ears. Blood and steam gushed from the auditory holes, the Titans nearly collapsing as they fell to their knees.

The stunned silence lasted only a second before the three headed beast charged the Titans at its back.

It was like a frenzied animal, a spinning mess of death and blood as giant body parts flew all about.

And Mikasa was right in the fray with him, slaying a titan even as the creature tore away the neck of one next to her.

Without further prompting, all the soldiers took advantage of the momentary weakness in the Titans, to kill as many as they could before they recovered from the roar.

For once, when the streets ran red, it was with the steaming blood of Titans instead of humans.

[[[That was crazy! He doesn't even know who we are!]]]

[KILL!KILL!KILL!KILL!KILL!]

[[Well played, Armin, well played.]]

Eins, Zwei, and Drei were unanimously pissed to say the least. Drei knew that Armin might have been lying for a reaction, this exact reaction, but the possibility that it was true, that these people died because he was an idiot… !

They spun around, their tails ripping through the front of three, four buildings as their foot came down on the head of a four meter Titan. With a snarl, they raced forward once more, slamming into the boulder once more. Several humans made quick escapes from their attempts to kill the Titans in front of the rock, before said rock nearly squished them along with the Titans themselves.

"Okay, I'll admit, that was a great idea," Connie said loudly in amazement, over the ringing in his ears as he bore witness to the greatest turnabout he could have ever dreamed of: Titans dropping like flies, to humans.

"Cadet, that was beyond reckless," Rico remarked through gritted teeth as she rubbed her ears. "But also brilliant. You might have just saved us half the casualties with that stunt."

"Thank you, Ma'am," Armin remarked warily, watching as the golden dragon pushed onward with its cargo, for lack of a better word. Soldiers were flying around it in an attempt to keep it safe and let it focus on its mission.

And none more so than Mikasa, bringing down a fifteen meter Titan just in time for the corpse to be crushed beneath the rolling stone. *'Whatever you are, you truly hate Titans,'* Mikasa thought as she flew through the air, watching as each head pushed the boulder along with a steadfast determination. *'Humans have never seen something like you. But Titans try to kill and eat you just like us. Perhaps we're the same, you and humans,'* She thought, coming down to kill a ten meter Titan on a roof, watching as the golden scales passed, catching a glimpse at the focused yet wrathful green eyes. *'Perhaps you're even the same as me. Your kind nearly wiped out by them and now you're here, fighting them… and protecting us. Why? Is it to spite the Titans? Or maybe you understand the concept of the*

Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend? Or maybe you just have more sympathy than most humans,' she wondered before changing her current blades for new ones. *'Whatever the case, Eren would have loved to have seen you…'* she thought, focusing on the battle at hand, and the scarf on her neck.

Pixis watched from atop Rose, giving orders as reports came in. Things were turning out better than he expected with the rush job on sending everyone out to make the situation more manageable. While the beast rushing the plan had made everything more dangerous for those protecting the golden reptile, it made things easier for the other teams.

The force dedicating to distracting the Titans, luring them to the walls had low casualties due to the low amount of Titans already near the walls, who they might otherwise accidentally stumble upon while leading another Titan to the wall.

The soldiers trimming away at the Titans still heading for the creature were less lucky, but lucky all the same: many of them were able to get sneak attacks on the distracted giants before being noticed. But that was balanced against the Titans that did notice them often being in groups.

Then the soldiers in the frying pan, the ones sent in to give their all to distract and/or kill the Titans closest to their new ally as the dragon moved the boulder. He sent in some of the best they had; of the veterans, the soldiers and even the new recruits.

And now this roar… it made him frown grimly. He couldn't see the perfectly situation from here, but he could see the golden shape trudging along in the distance. It was hard not to notice that. The lack of smoke signal meant either that the operation was proceeding still… or there was no one left to report the failure. But until that golden beast collapsed, he'd consider this entire gamble still had a chance.

Besides, there was a *lot* of Titan steam rising from the area. That was a good sign as far as he was concerned.

Meanwhile

"Did you feel that?" Bertolt asked nervously as they watched the event from a faraway rooftop, the strange beast pushing the boulder onward.

"That pulse, like I was almost forced to transform, and that my ears feel like they're about to start bleeding?" Reiner asked rhetorically with gritted teeth of pain.

"I was hoping I imagined that," Annie said with a pale complexion on her fraying calm expression, eyes trembling. "What is that thing? That can't be one of the Nine."

"The devils must have found a way to make a new kind of Titan with the Coordinates," Reiner said with a grimace. "Dammit, at this rate, I'll have to use my Titan-"

"Shut up!" Annie hissed in alarm. "Are you insane, talking about that so openly?!"

Reiner looked ready to snap before stopping, eyes wide for a second. "Yeah, what was I thinking…?" he asked distantly, getting a worried look from Bertolt before he snapped out of it. "Still, we need to stop that thing."

"Reiner, I know it's not the mission, but… if that is some kind of shifter?" Bertolt started with an uncertain look. "Should we just take whoever is inside back with us? Finally go home?"

Annie scowled. "Assuming that thing even is human inside, would they accept that kind of consolation back home?"

"Y-yeah, but this is… a pretty big development, something they have no idea about," Bertolt reasoned.

Annie scowled, unconvinced but seeing the point. "… Is it possible it's the Coordinate, forcing itself into a very bizarre Beast-variant?" she wondered with a scowl. "It does have a roar, almost like a scream…"

Reiner went wide eyed at the connection, before his eyes hardened. "Something doesn't make sense. Why now, not five years ago? Why stun them instead of control them?" Reiner mused, shaking his head.

"And if we leave now, and we're wrong, our covers will be blown," Bertolt admitted, despite his own feelings on the matter.

"For now, we stay the course; find out how this thing was made if we can. If there are more," Reiner said grimly. "Annie-"

"Hey! What are you three doing?!"

The trio of infiltrators turned in alarm to see Kitz Woermann staring at them.

"Captain," they all greeted on instinct, even if they were all tense and rigid.

"What are you yammering about in the middle of a battle?! Are you three trying to hide on the side lines and avoid your duties?!" he demanded with his usual haunted look tinged in anger.

"No, Sir," Annie answered calmly, pointing to Bertolt. "Our friend here was disoriented from the roar. We got him away to recover and rejoin the fight."

"R-right, I didn't cover my ears in time, Captain," Bertolt agreed.

"I don't care for your excuses! Just get back out there and keep the Titans off that thing," Kitz ordered before giving them a stiff nod. "As you were, Cadets."

"Sir."

All three stood there, motionless with very vacant eyes, sharing an uneasy look…

Meanwhile

Eins, Zwei, and Drei could feel their muscles burning now as they kept pushing on. They were tired… which was strange to Zwei's mind. They had been in pain and frustrated, but they still had energy to spare up until a few minutes ago.

[[[Roaring too much makes us tired?]]]]

[That kind of roar, apparently.]

[[We only use that once a day from now on.]]

[[[[Agreed.]]]]

"Come on, Trips! Last corner! You're on the home stretch!" Sasha called encouragingly, narrowly dodging across the roof to escape the reach of a fifteen meter Titan.

Everything went slow for her as she realized there was now a ten meter Titan directly below her, just over the edge of the roof. She could feel her death approaching, horror building at the sight of the mouth opening and knowing she wouldn't be able to maneuver away in time…

Until a golden blur of scales and fangs rushed in, knocking her back onto the roof. Sasha stared up in awe, seeing one of the heads had shot over from the other side of the building, snapping its jaw down on the Titan.

And it was staring rather intently at her… glaring, more like. It was a rather creepily familiar. Still…

"Thank you! You're amazing, Trips!" Sasha cried out in tears of joy, flying off before she got attacked again.

[[[[Same old Potato.]]]]

The three heads shared some fond annoyance over that exchange before finally pushing the boulder on, making sure to slam their tails down on any Titan they flattened under the boulder, by some strange chance they managed to regenerate even from that.

They were mere blocks away now.

But Zwei was still troubled. There was still no Armored Titan.

[[How do they vanish like this, or appear?]]

[[[We turned into this.]]]

[Could a Titan turn into a variant like that?]

It would explain a few things. They knew the Armored Titan vanished years ago, but were too far away to make out what exactly happened. And the Colossal today? If it turned back into a regular Titan and ran inside the hole… no, something about that didn't make sense. Something tugging from the gaps in their memories, something said it would have been noticed.

Something didn't add up. Zwei knew Armin was the smarts of the group, but Zwei's head was almost the sum total of the intellect of whoever they were, all but unhindered by rage or emotions. Thinking was his purpose. And his thoughts were painting a very uncomfortable puzzle that he just didn't have all the pieces to yet.

So, the question remained: Where was the armored titan?

"Hey, Armin?" Connie called as they hung on the wall for a second to survey the situation- and distracting three Titans below them, fruitlessly trying to claw towards their higher position. "How the hell is Trips going to lodge that rock in there hard enough with Titans trying to get through?" he asked in bewilderment

"… I think I know," Armin said under his breath, recalling how the boulder got loose in the first place.

"Everyone! Be careful attacking Titans around the boulder!" Rico called as the three headed beast pushed the rock towards the hole. "One miscalculation and you ***will*** be crushed!"

"Yeah, no kidding!" Jean grunted, taking out a Titan trying to climb on top of the boulder even as its feet were being crushed. He made eye contact with the scaled giant. Getting a nod from those intelligent eyes was somehow more terrifying than any Titan he had seen, but also relieving, paradoxically. *'Still… why do those eyes feel so familiar?'*

Eins, Zwei, and Drei had slowed only because of the Titans getting in the way again, but they were begrudgingly grateful this time around. In the midst of everything, they had almost forgotten about the double-moats surrounding the gate, forming two semi-circles.

[[[It's too big to fall down there.]]]

[[But just small enough to get stuck if it slides into the side.]]

[We might break it, trying to get the boulder out.]

[[[[Then we won't let it slip!]]]]

Thankfully, the stream of Titans had died down, allowing them to be more careful as they marched forward. Zwei and Eins were both very skeptical about the bridges holding them, but were pleasantly surprised as they did.

Drei, however, was too busy tossing a four meter down into the deep ditch as they passed, hoping it would stay there until someone, anyone killed it.

The trio of heads sagged a little as they finally placed the rock against the hole, but didn't truly relax.

"Yahoo! He did it!" Sasha cheered.

Rico narrowed her eyes, not quite ready to give the signal for success yet.

"Is it over?" Mikasa asked with a scowl, knowing there were more Titans in Trost, but something about this scenario didn't feel like it was complete.

The golden beast narrowed their six eyes as they heard the Titans beginning to build up on the other side. Keeping their weight off it, they could feel the slight nudging the Titans caused. It wouldn't be easy or quick but the Titans could indeed break through again, their sheer numbers pushing the rock aside.

[Not my side this time, dammit.]

[[[Fine by me.]]]

[[We're not doing it that hard either way.]]

They ran.

"Is it running away? Or just going after more Titans?" Krista asked in concern as they flew by the side of the wall, watching the golden beast run away from the boulder.

"I don't think so," Ymir remarked with a scowl, her doubts confirmed as the beast jumped onto a ten-meter Titan, just at the edge of the nearest buildings and came to a halt.

The eyes of Eins gleamed with angry determination, the mouth on Drei quirked into victorious delight and Zwei stared with a stony expression.

They bolted forward.

"Yeah!"

"Go for it!"

"You got this, Big Guy!"

The cries of the humans fell on deaf ears, their minds fixated solely and only on the boulder.

Hit the rock too soft and it was pointless.

Hit it too hard and it might start to break.

The first was undesirable, the second unacceptable.

They couldn't get to full speed at this distance and that was the point.

With a great lurch and a spin to their left, they made impact with the boulder, unleashing a great crashing sound as the boulder was slammed hard into the gap.

The very wall rumbled from the force, and there was a short silence from all unengaged soldiers until…

Everyone started to cheer. Rico sagged in relief, giving the signal for a mission success. The three heads arched back to let out of a roar of triumph.

It was short lived, almost dying in their throats.

"KRISTA!"

Everyone looked up in shock, to see a blond figure falling from the sky, like a bird with broken wings, with another soldier trying to fly down after her.

Krista gritted her teeth in fear. Her line had come loose from the vibrations of the impact with the boulder and it refused to fire again. She fired her other line and almost felt the urge to curse as it bounced off the surface from an improper hit.

Ymir was rushing down towards her, but wouldn't reach her in time. No one was closer, having had to avoid their giant ally at the end to not get crushed.

They had won, and she was about to die. Not even to a Titan, but something as stupid as this. It felt like the world was spitting at her, mocking her for daring to try and be anything at all…

Still, it was nice to know that she was important to someone, if Ymir's frantic look was anything to go back. Maybe… maybe she'd live long enough after she hit the ground to tell Ymir her true name.

She looked down again, and her eyes widened for new reasons. She was going to crash near the three headed creature.

And it was staring right at her.

For a brief instant, she'd like to image it might save her… like it did Sasha. But it had no arms. It couldn't he-

She blinked as it rushed forward.

It jumped.

Its right most head was coming right up to her and-

Its mouth opened and she nearly fainted as she saw so, so many teeth. Not Titan teeth like humans, but sharp teeth made for shredding.

The tongue was grasping her as she passed by the lips and-

The mouth snapped shut as the beast landed.

Dead silence filled the area,

"Holy. Shit. Did Trips just eat Krista!?" Sasha asked in alarm.

"If he did, I think it was an accident," Mikasa remarked calmly. "However… have you noticed that the head is not chewing?"

The trio of heads froze, feeling a rush through them before mentally shaking it off. Eins was more than a little annoyed as he felt the tiny female squirm in his mouth while he was *trying* to keep her from slip down his throat. Drei was just a bit amused by his counterpart's situation while Zwei scanned the area for lingering Titans that might surprise the girl while trying to get her bearings after they let her out.

"You…"

All three of them felt their neck spines stand on edge. Something was wrong. They looked up to see something- no, someone falling down towards them. Deliberately by the looks of it.

"BASTARD!"

A great thundering noise boomed above them, the heads heads staring in at the bright light flashing above them.

All eyes, humans or beast, stared in disbelief as a small titan appeared above the three heads.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei were all dumbfounded as time seemed to slow.

[[[That was… a human.]]]

[[That was a soldier.]]

[Now it's a titan.]

[[[[… Titans can turn into Humans?!]]]]

They didn't have time to contemplate that horrifying revelation as the Titan landed mouth first on one of the necks, the extra sharp fangs sinking deeply through the golden scales as the dark blood sprayed forth.

The great beast roared and screamed in agony.

End of Chapter

Ha! Had you all going for a moment, didn't I! You thought I was going to end Trost like canon, just with Minidorah! Nope, not this fic fokes! In a moment of rage, Ymir has revealed herself to "avenge" Krista/Historia.

This is another one of the issues of having no arms and three heads, I suppose.

Well, I hoped you all enjoyed this, and have been enjoying AoT Season 4. I know I have!

Also, for anyone interested, I have two other AoT fics I update semi-regularly:

Hell Overfloweth and ***Ripple of Kindness.***

With that shameless self advertising out of the way, I hope you all enjoyed this fic. Until next time!

PS Yes, the issue of the Attack and Founding Titans will be brought up eventually

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 5

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

Reiner watched in shock and unwanted dread as he saw Krista, the Angelic Goddess of the 104th, falling from the wall like a bird with broken wings.

"She's not going to make it," Annie observed under her breath. The fall was too high, no one had been close enough to get her in time, and the smaller girl would have saved herself by now if she could.

What rotten luck, dying in such a way when the worst was finally over.

"Wait, that thing is-" Bertolt stopped abruptly as they saw the golden beast running forth, leaping into the air… and swallowing Krista whole.

"… What the fuck…?" Reiner asked with a shaky voice. "Was… was Krista just eaten?"

"No way. After all of that, it turns on everyone when it's stuck inside?" Annie voiced, swallowing thickly as she clutched her blade, trying to suppress the trembling in her hands. She double-checked to make sure her ring was still on her finger.

If they had to fight that thing, right here and now… even with all these soldiers, they might have to use their Titans and risk exposing themselves just to survive this beast.

"Reiner, what do we do?" Bertolt asked suddenly, getting silence in return. He looked over in concern, inhaling sharply as he froze.

Reiner was clutching his head, his whole body trembling. "What… what is happening?" he asked in a numb, shuddering tone.

"Dammit, this again," Annie cursed quietly. "Bertolt, do someth-"

The trio grew silent in disbelief when all too familiar thunder and lightning filled the air above the creature. The three heads all stared up with the same alarm and confusion as the warriors, a Titan forming in midair; a very familiar, small Titan sporting sharp teeth.

It came crashing down with a vicious roar, biting into a neck of the golden reptile. Black blood spewed as the sharp teeth cleaved through the scales. One head roared in pain, the other two in fury.

"But that's… !?" Bertolt said in alarm.

"The Jaw Titan," Annie recognized in quiet shock.

"Marcel… ," Reiner whispered before his demeanor calmed into determination, glaring at the fourth Shifter. To think, after all this time, it would show up here and now. No. It was entirely possible, maybe even probable, that the Jaw Titan had been right under their nose all this time. How ironic. "New plan. We help take down the Jaw."

Meanwhile, the middle head thrashed about in an attempt to dislodge the small Titan's fangs from his scaled neck, dark blood spraying about as the left head cried out in shock and the right gritted its teeth, hard.

"What the fuck?! Who and what was that!?" Jean asked in disbelief.

"That… was that a person?" Connie asked numbly. "We just saw that, right?"

"Did I… imagine that?" Armin asked, his voice cracking as he processed the implication.

"I… I can't believe it, but no, cadet. You just witnessed a soldier turn into a Titan," Rico said with wide eyes before regaining her

composure… somewhat. "Everyone that can still fight! Attack that Titan! Defend the Gold Beast!"

"You heard the woman!" Reiner yelled as he flew through the air with blades raised, Annie right at his tail.

Ymir grunted, pulling her head back to rip away a chunk of the neck. It was tough, so much tougher than a Titan's flesh, but she did it. She was screwed, she knew it, but like hell she was going to accept this. Accept this thing eating Krista as if she was some reward treat for saving them all! If she died, she was taking one of these heads with her! Fuck the Walls, Fuck Marley, and Fuck this stupid pimped-out iguana!

With that, she jumped away, just as one of the heads nearly bit off her feet. Reiner landed on the injured neck before quickly leaping off as the beast turned about.

[[Shit…]]

[[[You okay?]]]

[[No! Of course not! I lost a piece of my neck.]]

[[Just… Just keep an eye on that titan while I heal.]]

[[[Got it. She won't get us twice.]]]

[… What about the girl in my mouth?]

[[Spit her out already!]]

[[[Are you crazy!?]]]

[She'll die!]

[[If that titan bit Eins, she'd already be dead.]]

The small Titan leaped from roof to roof, making sure not to let the soldiers surround her too much by remaining idle. But there were so many of them, and if she let Mikasa get too close, she knew she was done for. That girl was basically a monster in her own right. But where was the cadet who was worth a hundred soldiers anyway?

"Damn, this thing is fast," Jean cursed as Ymir dodged away from them the instant the cables connected.

"It's not fighting back though…?" Armin said, his mind beginning to race. This Titan was obviously intelligent, and it had many chances to attack them, even just by attacking the cables. So it wasn't after them, just the three-headed creature. But they couldn't just risk this… Shifter killing the thing that just saved Trost. The draconic entity was probably humanity's best hope.

Ymir leaped onto the wall, running across the structure as her claws gripped the stone, using it to hurl herself back toward the three-headed beast. The middle head was still limp and bleeding, perhaps even out of commission. Her target was the right head, the one that ate Krista.

Eins glared at her before one of their two tails smacked the Titan shifter out of the air. Ymir managed to flip onto her feet while holding the tail, roaring at the larger enemy and about to take a quick bite out of the tail.

And she would have, if not for the second tail slamming into the back of her head, making her mouth snap shut prematurely. She growled as the left head swung over to her, prepared to return the favor. Ducking under the tails, she managed to leap under the gaping maw just in time. On a lark, she tried to dig her claws into the underside of the neck. They sparked and left scratches, but not even deep enough to draw blood.

Ymir grunted. As much as she wanted to go after the head that got Krista, she'd settle for finishing off the middle one. With that, she

went into a full, all-fours sprint, about to leap toward the neck of the limping neck.

But Zwei was not so easily defeated. His head shot to Ymir all at once, forcing her to jump back as the injured and limp head glared coldly at her.

She growled in midair before gasping as one of her hands was cut off, courtesy of Reiner. She barely moved in time to dodge the other two. Annie only severed two fingers, while Bertolt missed her leg entirely.

"Damn. Almost had her," Reiner said with a scowl as he landed on top of Eins's head, Annie landing on the ground in front of the golden beast while Bertolt was on the base of the middle neck. "Hey, Scales?" Reiner called, getting a snorting grunt from the head below him. "Any idea what the fuck is going on?" he asked, playing dumb for now. The head beneath his shook minutely and Reiner was both grateful and disturbed for the monster's consideration of his balance. "Didn't think so," he said, watching Ymir leap back towards the buildings.

It wasn't intentional, Reiner knew, but this position was perfect for the tri-headed creature to wait out the Jaw Titan. The city buildings made for decent platforms for the small Shifter's agility to be of great use in dodging and evading, evident by how none of the soldiers could reach the Jaw in time with their three-dimensional gear. But this open area around the gate meant that the Jaw had to expose herself before getting close to her target.

"You think you can handle that Hag if she gets close again?" Reiner asked, getting a rather firm nod. "Good."

Bertolt, meanwhile, was staring intently at the wound left by the Jaw Titan. It was healing, but it was nothing like how a Titan would heal itself. The black blood had cauterized and ceased to flow freely as the wound was now covered by a translucent, slimy, amber-colored substance. It was strange, and within, Bertolt could faintly see the

flesh reforming, healing, and replacing the missing tissue in rapid time. Which meant its enhanced durability was a trade-off for slower regeneration.

If he turned into a Titan, if he unleashed his destructive power, could that kill this monster? Normally he could only transform once a day, but he hadn't used the explosion earlier when he transformed to kick in the wall. He could, in theory, still pull one off even if it would exhaust him beyond the ability to function afterward. Would that be worth it? Taking out this creature right here, right now? Would they ever get a better chance than this?

He tried not to think about how many in the 104th he'd be killing if he did that. Connie, Jean, Sasha, Mikasa, Armin, Marco, Ymir. All wiped away in the blink of an eye.

Bertolt stiffened, trembling eyes looking upon his left. The neighboring head was looking sidelong, directly at him. Bertolt couldn't help but wonder: Did it know? What he was? What all three of them were?

Drei released his gaze on Bertolt, allowing the tall male to relax.

[[[I remember him. Sleeps weird.]]]

[Skittish, like Armin, but without the brains.]

[[We're bigger than Titans, of course they're skittish.]]

[[[Careful. I think more Titans are coming this way.]]]

The trio of heads peered out, watching as the Jaw Titan leaped over rooftops and through streets, nearly fully healed herself. Eins and Zwei didn't see any more Titans, but they understood what Drei meant. They could smell them, sense them all almost. There were definitely more Titans nearby.

[[If more Titans show up before I heal, we won't be able to protect the girl.]]

[[[But…]]]

[[Is she even still alive in there?]]

[Yes.]

[[[Can't we just set her down?]]]

[If we do, that bastard is going to take a bite out of one of us.]

[[And it's not like we can just ask someone to take.]]

[[[… Actually, I think we can.]]]

Zwei winced with his drooping head, forcing himself to follow Drei's gaze. It was hard to focus past the rush of soldiers in the air, but he'd notice her anywhere.

Mikasa was staring right at them, or rather, at Eins. And she did not look at all malicious. Eins met her gaze and the Ackerman froze as they held one another's stare. The beast slowly nodded, and Mikasa matched the motion.

"Dammit, why can't we hit her!?" Connie yelled, landing on the roof with the Jaw Titan already well away.

"She's really fast, even when her hand was injured," Jean said with a scowl. "Every time we get close to hitting her, she turns in an instant. And she knows our trajectory because of the cables."

Training for Titans didn't involve training them for targets that would dodge. The worst was abnormals who moved unpredictably, but even they didn't seem to be intentionally avoiding attacks. This one though was obviously predicting their movements.

"Yeah, but…" Sasha paused with them. "Why hasn't she tried to kill anyone but Trips?"

The three grew uncomfortable at that, remembering what they had seen just before the Titan appeared. How the figure engulfed by the light appeared to be a human, a soldier even.

'If it's a soldier, that means they've been hiding among us for a while,' Armin thought with a confused scowl as he followed after the Jaw Titan, watching others try and fail to attack it. *'But if they were with the Armor and Colossal, why aren't they attacking us? And where is the Armor? Could this one… not be aligned with them?'*

"You… BASTARD!"

The words flashed in his mind. He couldn't place the voice when it screamed like that, but… if he heard that right… *'If it was an emotional reaction, the only cause could be…'* he paused before glancing back to the golden beast, the rightmost head keeping its maw closed. *'But if it was reacting to Krista being eaten, then wouldn't that mean this Titan is actually…?'*

Ymir was just short of seeing red. The three were guarding the golden monster. She knew what they were, where they were from. And they obviously remembered her from her days as a Pure Titan. They wanted this Titan power back; there was no doubt about that. She was fucked no matter what. Either she died, got taken back to Marley to be eaten, or taken prisoner by the people of the walls. Fine, she didn't care anymore. Just as long as this thing paid before she was done.

And if those three tried to stop her? Well, she felt like she owed them a bit for killing their friend, even if she had no control of it. That said, if they got in her way, she'd push at least one of them into transforming before she went down, blow their cover and all.

With that set in her mind, she made another dash at the beast. If going upfront or from the sides wouldn't work, she'd just take it from

another angle.

"Oh, shit, it's crawling on the Walls!" a soldier yelled as Ymir used her claws to scale and leap across the Walls.

"Trying to escape?" Reiner muttered to himself, trying to steady himself as the three-headed creature began to turn, the head he was on shaking "lightly" back and forth. Reiner took that as his prompt to get off. "Bertolt, Annie, give him some room to move!"

"Obviously," Annie stated, eyeing the tails as she began to ascend the wall, in an attempt to intercept the Jaw Titan.

They were disappointed but unsurprised as the Jaw Titan leapt off the wall and out of their path, heading for the golden beast once more.

Ymir roared, sounding less human than her Titan already did, as she closed in on her enemy.

She froze, however, as Eins opened his mouth and leaned his head down.

Time stopped for Ymir, seeing the unconscious form of Krista held in the tongue of the giant reptile. And, to Ymir's eyes, there wasn't a scratch on her. Those fangs had not caused a drop of blood to fall from her body. Ymir could even see Krista was breathing.

Ymir gritted her teeth, her real teeth as she finally understood.

"Shit!" she cursed as she tried to find a way out of this-

But not before losing both of her legs to Mikasa.

"Shit, shit, shit, shit! You idiot!" Ymir screamed to herself as she came tumbling to a halt before the beast and realized that Krista had never been in danger from this creature. That it had been trying to save her, not eat her.

She exposed herself, sacrificed the life she had retaken, for nothing.

Mikasa didn't stop upon taking the limbs off the Titan, aiming her cables up to hook into the snout of Eins. The right head grunted but kept his maw open as Mikasa ascended, carefully and gingerly taking the smaller and now-slimy soldier from the tongue of the beast. Mikasa paused for half an instant, confirming that Krista was indeed breathing, before looking up at the green eye watching her. An eye that was painfully similar to Eren's. She said nothing, giving a firm nod before flying off.

Drei growled out an acknowledgment to Mikasa before he and Eins turned their attention fully on the small Titan.

Ymir laid there as each head reached out and snapped their jaws on her arms. And for that moment, she could not find the will again to fight.

The humans watched on in uncertain fascination. Should they do anything? Even Armin was unsure. This Titan could be important and valuable if taken alive… if they could get it to turn back into a human.

But could the golden beast still be reasoned within this state?

Ymir glared emptily as she watched the middle head rise up, the strange muck covering its wounds shredding in a disgusting mess to reveal completely healed scales.

The middle head leveled its gaze onto her, and Ymir knew it was pissed.

"Well?" she asked. She asked with her Titan's mouth no less. She almost laughed at the stunned look the reptile had.

"It can talk…?" Jean muttered in disbelief, similar mutterings going around the humans.

"Ma'am?" Armin called to Rico, a rather frantic look on his face. The female officer looked rather pale from hearing a Titan of all things talk. "Shouldn't we…?"

They didn't have the chance to regather themselves, as Zwei's jaw snapped down on the head of the Jaw Titan. Ymir thrashed and screamed, knowing it would do no good. She heard her Titan's skull pop and shatter, but the fangs never touched her in the nape. What was it doing…?

Eins and Drei wrestled with the arms a bit before ripping both limbs off, leaving the Titan completely amputated of all limbs. With a snort, Zwei whipped his head about to toss her into one of the deep trenches surrounding the gate.

"Damn. He's stuffing all kinds of holes," Reiner joked despite his scowl, hanging along the side of the wall with Annie and Bertolt nearby as well.

"Wait, what just happened?" Connie asked in confusion. "Why didn't Trips eat her?"

"I think he figured out we needed to take that one prisoner," Jean responded idly.

"Oh? He, not It? Jean, are you warming up to Trips?" Sasha teased with a grin.

"He could have swallowed Krista whole but didn't. I'll buy he's on our side after that," he answered, looking around curiously. "Speaking of which, where's Mikasa and Krista?"

The Ackerman in question was atop the wall, Krista unconscious on the battlement. Mikasa stared down, having been prepared to descend into the battle once more, but the fighting was over… for now.

Ymir groaned as she pulled herself free from the nape of her Titan. It was better than having to regrow a leg or arm when they eventually cut her out themselves or had big and yellow do it for them. She didn't know what would happen next, what the government here would try to do with her. Torture her for information? Experiment on her? Maybe just kill her?

She'd deal with that as she had to. For now, she was spent in every way possible. And, she couldn't complain too much. Krista was alive.

"Graaaaa."

Ymir's eyes slowly dilated at the loud crooning sound behind her. Shaking, she turned her head and saw it: another Titan, one that had been thrown down here earlier and forgotten about. It was looking right at her, reaching forth.

She was about to bite her finger, to transform again, when a figure descended into the crevice, slicing the nape of the Titan, which fell dead as it began to turn into smoke.

Ymir's surprise turned to a scowl as she saw her… savior.

"You look disgusting," Annie commented neutrally. "Looks like you have a lot of explaining to do, Ymir."

Ymir smirked dryly. Right, she had almost forgotten, there was also the option that the dogs of Marley got to her first.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei trotted away from the gate, their steps slow and heavy as they peered out over Trost.

[[The hole is closed.]]

[No more Titans near us.]

[[[The humans are safe for now.]]]

[[[[And we are tired…]]]]

The earth rumbled and stones snapped.

Every soldier snapped their head to the dragon as it slumped forth to its knees, and came to rest on its stomach with its massive necks curling to one side.

"Well, that certainly wasn't a death throe," Rico murmured. "Cadet, go up top and tell Ackerman to get down here. We need a team to make sure no Titan wanders onto our sleeping ally."

"Yes, Ma'am," Armin accepted, watching as Rico descended down to the trench to assess the situation with the apparent Titan shifter.

It was surreal to think about: they had their first victory against the Titans, an ally in the form of an intelligent three-headed monster, and a captive that could switch between human and Titan forms. Of all the ways he imagined the breach of Wall Rose playing out, he never would have fathomed two of those instances and barely hoped for the first.

Still, maybe, just maybe, things were turning in humanity's favor.

Meanwhile

It wasn't until dusk that the scouts finally arrived back at Wall Rose. They knew that something amazing must have happened when they saw that not only were Titans unable to get inside the wall around Trost but there was a hole in the wall that had somehow been plugged.

However, this presented Erwin with an issue: they could not get their horses and supplies back in through Trost. They'd have to venture to the district in the west or east. That said, he was not about to leave before knowing the situation. Thus, he sent Levi to assess the situation while the scouts remained far enough from the walls to not catch the attention of the Titans clambering around it. Depending on Levi's word, some would remain at Trost as reinforcements.

It didn't take long for Levi to return on his horse, but it was longer than Erwin expected. "What's the situation?" he asked calmly.

"It went to hell, obviously," Levi answered bluntly. "But things are calm now. No more Titans getting in and most inside are dead or will be soon."

"And just how did they seal the wall?" Hange asked curiously. "Or was I not informed on some new technology we have?"

Levi eyed her for a second before looking back to Erwin. "I can't believe I'm saying this, but they had a friend. A big one."

Erwin's brow furrowed while Hange's eyes lit up. "A Titan?! Are you saying a Titan helped humanity?!" she asked excitedly.

"I don't know if it's a Titan, but it's a big fucker, and they say it closed the breach with a bolder. How it did that with no arms, I'm not sure," Levi answered bluntly.

"No arms?" Hange repeated in bewilderment.

Erwin was equally confused but didn't show it. "We'll head to Karanes District. Hange, you and your squad will remain here to observe and aid with the situation," he ordered.

Hange grinned ecstatically. "Sir, thank you, sir," she said with a salute before turning to gather her underlings.

"You sure that's a good idea, leaving Four Eyes here?" Levi asked idly.

Erwin had a small smile. "Well, it was either this or I let her pester you with questions over our new "ally" you mentioned."

Levi grunted, admittedly glad to be spared of that headache.

End of Chapter

Well, this is long overdue. Sorry for the wait. Had a… lot of IRL issues and writers block for this particualr chapter. But yeah, this chapter wraps up the last of Trost now that Ymir's outburst is finished.

As you can all see, while Erendorah's durability is scaled down as well, it takes more than just the Jaw titan to take him down. That said, our three-headed Yeager is now very tuckered out and taking a nap. Due to everything happening a bit fasterthan canon, the scouts didn't arrive until after the action was over. And in the end, Erendorah won more than a few favors in his effects to keep Krista alive.

Until next time, hope you all enjoyed this. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

PS Erendorah threw that titan in the crevice back in the last chapter while plugging the hole, which was a set up for that last scene with Ymir and Annie.

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 6

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

The day after the battle was a morbid and solemn affair. Despite their victory and the casualties being better than they could have been, there was little to celebrate. They were too busy cleaning up the town of dead bodies and marking down what dead they could identity. Regardless of their state, all of the bodies were being gathered for funeral pyres.

And all the while, their golden savior slept soundly. Few expected him to awake suddenly anymore. The night had been filled with cannon fire, as they killed the remaining Titans pawing uselessly at the wall. Not once had the scaled creature done more than shift in his sleep, and by order of Commander Pixis, no one was to attempt to approach the creature. It wasn't dead, so they knew it would awaken in its own good time.

That order was easier to obey than the other.

Pixis knew it was impossible to keep the incident with the Titan Shifter quite. There were too many that had been there and seen it, keeping a gag order with that many was almost impossible. He still made the order, if only for the sake of saying he tried.

"This complicates things," Pixis noted obviously, taking a swig of his drink as he stood on the wall alone, save one.

"I should assume you mean the Shifter and not the Beast?" Erwin asked knowingly.

"Clever as always," Pixis answered in amusement. "For once, the morale of the soldiers was on the up. We had retaken the wall and had a creature that appears to be our ally. But the rumors of a soldier

that can turn into a Titan?" he paused to shake his head. "With no explanation, everyone is growing wary and paranoid again."

"Not without good cause," Erwin said with a nod of understanding. Pixis gave him a look and both had the same suspicion: There were more Titan Shifters. The Armored and the Colossal could be within the army, posing as soldiers. That was alarming. "We will have to try and offer an explanation. Has the prisoner said anything?"

"Not a peep. She's just sat in her cell since yesterday," Pixis answered with a hum as he looked over Trost. "There is also the matter of our friend down there."

Erwin followed his gaze towards the golden pile of scales sleeping down below. The Scout Commander was still uncertain what to make of this creature, having not seen it awake himself. "You believe the Central Government may attempt to have it executed?"

"While concerning, I'm more concerned about what to do if they don't," Pixis answered, scratching his bald head. "Even if we find a place to keep the bastard, how do we get him out of from here?"

Erwin frowned as he acknowledged that logistical issue. The only way to get the creature through any of the gates would involve this creature breaking through them enough to make room for itself, compromising the walls. Not truly an option. The only straightforward idea Erwin had meant abandoning Trost, letting the beast use it as a den of sort, moving the boulder aside when it ventured out. A small sacrifice for such a useful ally and tool.

"You said the creature is intelligent to the point of understanding speech. Perhaps it will have an idea of its own," Erwin remarked with a troubled look. "Still, if that is the case, that just leaves one very important question."

"Where did it learn our language," Pixis summarized in agreement. That was a conundrum. Did someone actually teach this creature everything it would need to understand humans?

Meanwhile

Hange hadn't known what to expect when she eagerly scaled the walls surrounding Trost, looking for something that was big enough to be a Titan, but didn't look like one. But once she laid eyes on the creature, she had only one word for it:

"Beautiful."

And it was even more so, seeing it up close and in the sun. Every inch of it was plated with scales that shimmered like gold against the light. Horns that gave a regal disposition, like crowns. Tails, two of them! Long with a club of spikes at the end of each, yet even that looked as ornate as it was functional. Even the claws at the bottom of its feet were like swords. And, of course, there were the heads. Three of them, each with necks longer than some Titans.

Truly, he was a beauty to behold.

So, Hange took it upon herself to document this apparent ally of humanity, this "dragon" as some might call it. She sat on the roof of a building, overlooking the area the three headed entity slept in. One leg was crossed over the other as she sketched a detailed image of the slumbering creature, glancing up to double check her work.

Along the edges of the parchment, she scribbled notes. Mainly the size estimations she was making. They weren't that accurate, but they'd do until she saw the creature standing and walking in all its glory. Still, there was something odd about the creature to her. Three heads, two legs, two tails, and yet no arms. It looked… incomplete, with just the barrel of the body. But that would imply the creature was malformed or, disturbingly, not yet an adult. It was already taller than every known Titan besides the Colossal, so the idea that it could still grow taller was both amazing and alarming.

"Wow, that's really good!"

"Huh?" Hange snapped her attention to the right and found a young soldier standing there. "Who are you?"

"Sas- Sorry, Cadet Sasha Blouse," she answered sheepishly. "I'm part of the team that's suppose to guard Trips."

"Trips?" Hange questioned with a head tilt. "For the three heads?"

"Well, yeah, we had to call him something. And he can't speak even if he can understan-EEE!" Sasha squealed as Hange was suddenly upon her, grabbing Sasha by the shoulders.

"You Mean You Witnessed This Creature Displaying The Ability To Understand Speech!?" Hange asked with a manic smile.

Both of them froze at the slightest shifting of the great creature's tail.

"… Ma'am, please don't wake Trips up. I don't want to annoy him after he saved me," Sasha requested with a whisper.

"He saved you?" This was the wrong thing to say, Hange's smile becoming very alarming. "Intentionally?"

"Umm, yeah?" Sasha answered awkwardly. "You're… with the Scouts right?"

"Yes, yes I am. Section Commander Hange Zoe," Hange introduced, turning her gaze back to the creature. "Don't worry, I wouldn't dare disturbing his beauty sleep."

"That's… great? I'll just be going then… ," Sasha said, slowly backing away from the woman.

"I think I'll be seeing more of that girl," Hange said with a grin before sitting down and returning to her drawings.

Meanwhile

"So, you're serious," Levi stated coolly as he walked down a set of stairs that went underground, "The brat down here turned into a Titan?"

"I saw it with my own eyes, Sir," Rico answered tensely. "We found her pulling herself out of the nape of the Titan afterwards. There's no doubt that she's the one."

"And our superior wants me nearby in case she tries anything. Babysitting, in other words," Levi summarized. "I don't suppose there's anything else you can tell me?"

Rico paused in consideration before shaking her head. "No, just that when she transformed, there was a small explosion around her."

"Well, that's good to know," Levi muttered, eyeing a cell down the hall, the only one with guards right now. "What's she said?"

"Not a word," Rico answered simply. "She refuses to answer anything we asked."

"Perhaps you need better questions," Levi said as they arrived at the cell, peering at the girl inside. She was sitting on a bed, chained to a wall, and staring up at the ceiling with a blank expression.

Rico, the guards, and Ymir all jumped in alarm as Levi slammed the sole of his boot against the bars of the cell, a loud bang echoing through the underground. "What the hell!?" Ymir exclaimed, clutching her chest for a moment.

"See, she can speak," Levi stated neutrally. "I just wanted to get a good look at you, Brat."

"Piss off, half-pint," Ymir spat back. "Who the hell are you suppose to be?"

"Levi," he answered bluntly.

Ymir froze at that. Everyone in the walls knew that name. Love or hate the Scouts, the best of humanity was well known. "So, they sent the biggest short-stick they had to guard me? I'm honored," Ymir said with her arms crossed, trying to hide her nervousness at his stare.

"Well, our golden friend is on nap duty, so someone had to pick up the slack," Levi mused, leaning against the wall.

"Look, I don't know shit about that thing," Ymir said firmly.

"Really?" Levi questioned with a narrowed gaze.

"Never seen anything like it in my life," Ymir affirmed with a frown.

Levi held her gaze for a moment before nodding. "I believe you," he said, turning to leave.

Ymir blinked and suddenly felt very nervous. What did she say?

"You believe her?" Rico asked when they reached the steps.

"Not really, but if she is telling the truth, we have another lead," Levi answered.

"What do you mean?" Rico asked with a frown.

"The report said that brat transformed after the scaly bastard actually saved a cadet, but everyone thought she was eaten at first," Levi stated, glancing to Rico. "So, if she wasn't after the three-headed thing, she attacked because of the other cadet."

Rico stiffened. "You think she might be a Shifter too?"

"I doubt it. It's not impossible, but it sounds like that one would have transformed too if so, instead of letting themselves get caught by a literal maw of teeth," Levi mused thoughtfully. "Either way, this other cadet either knows something, or they might be the leverage we need to get this one to talk."

"I'd get her for questioning, but she's still unconscious," Rico informed with a frown.

"That's fine. I don't think any of us are going anywhere for the day."

Meanwhile

The situation was dire in the aftermath of their victory. Even with Trost secure, all the bodies of those sacrificed that day had to be found and collected, or whatever remained of them at least. Often, all that was left were severed limbs or a collection of bodies collected in some vile ball after a Titan had emptied its full belly.

To keep disease and plague from breaking out, it was all hands on deck. Everyone who didn't have a task elsewhere, was working around the city to help remove the dead.

But even soldiers were given breaks. Time to eat, rest, and give themselves a moment to grieve and collect themselves.

Mikasa was doing that final one in earnest.

She had an hour to herself. But she did not sleep or rest her eyes for a nap. No, she did the one thing she had been holding back since well before they had retaken Trost.

She found a quiet spot to sit down, be alone… and cry.

And once she did, it was like the tears would never stop flowing. From one thing to the next, she was able to push herself, focus herself on anything besides the fact that Eren was dead.

It hurt so much to think about about, to try and accept, that Eren was indeed gone. Eaten by some Titan that was now long dead as well. Why had she listened to him? She should have stuck with him and protected him. That was the whole reason she joined the military, to keep Eren from getting killed. And she failed, hopelessly and instantly. She failed Eren, Carla, Grisha. She failed everyone she

ever cared about. Even Armin, because now his best friend was gone and it was now down to just the two of them.

She had no urge to die, no. She left that behind just before "Trips" had saved her. But it still hurt, so much.

She took a moment to take a deep breath.

Even if she had no intent to die, she was going to see this through, like Eren would have. She'd still join the Scouts, and by the Walls and everything beyond them, she would see the ocean with Armin if it was the last thing she did.

"Mikasa, I've been looking all over for you," Reiner said as he entered the alley Mikasa was sitting in. "Your shift-"

She looked to him. She didn't glare, she didn't have to. Her stoic face, marred by bloodshot eyes, was story enough.

Reiner swallowed the words in his mouth before nodding. "I'll keep looking for you then," Reiner said, turning to leave and pretend like he hadn't seen her.

Mikasa didn't trust her voice to voice it, but she was thankful for that.

She took deep breaths, feeling a pit of rage in her chest. "Was this how you felt, Eren?" she asked herself, thinking back to that day, when they lost everything and Eren vowed to kill all the Titans.

If this was how he felt, she at least understood him a bit better in the end.

Meanwhile

Teeth. Teethteethteeth, too many teeth!

Krista lurched up in a cold sweet, halfway jumping to her feet as she looked around frantically. She was… on a table, covered by a blanket? And why was she not in uniform? Who had changed her?!

"So, you're awake."

She turned her gaze to meet a familiar head of blonde hair. "Armin?" Krista greeted in surprise. "What's going on? Weren't we… in Trost, fighting Titans?" she asked numbly, wondering if it had all been a horrible dream.

Armin smiled apologetically. "We were, Krista. That was yesterday. Take a look around," Armin said, motioning to the room around them.

Krista did so, realizing she was in some kind of mess hall, but there were people laying on the tables, just like her. "What is this…?"

"They're using this as a makeshift medical area, for the least critically injured," Armin explained softly. "Everyone with life threatening injuries got priority."

"But what happened? I remember the boulder, and then…?" Krista's eyes went wide again. "Oh walls, was I eaten by that… thing?"

"Not really?" Armin answered awkwardly. "It's more like he saved you, by catching you."

"Really?" Krista asked in surprise. "But then why did I pass out?"

"We're not sure, but you probably couldn't breath properly inside the mouth," Armin answered with a shrug. "You passed out. That was yesterday."

"Yesterday!?" Krista repeated in shock. "Did… did everyone else make…?" she stopped as she realized what she said, seeing the grimace Armin tried to cover. "Oh, Armin, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean-"

"No, no it's fine. I know what you meant," Armin assured quietly, holding himself together. "As far as we know, no one else died after that," he answered, being technically truthful.

"Thank goodness," Krista said in relief before looking awkward. "Not that I'm not happy to see you, but…?"

"Oh, we decided someone should be here when you woke up, so we tried to have someone here when we're not busy with the… clean up," Armin said with a frown.

Krista frowned at the implications. She could only imagine what it had to be like, scavenging for the bodies of those that fell to the Titans, whatever remained of them at least. Training never truly prepared them for that part of being in the military, but she doubt there was anything that truly could ready them short of actually experiencing it.

"I'll report in to start helping,' Krista immediately volunteered as she made to slide off the table, wobbling on her feet as she grasped her head with a groan.

"Careful," Armin said, hands half way outstretched to grab her if she fell. "Are you sure nothing's hurt or feels broken?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just had a weird dream is all," Krista answered idly.

"Dream?" Armin repeated curiously.

"Yeah, it felt like it kept going on forever. I can't remember much though, just that I was a little kid again, playing with my sister," Krista answered with a distant look in her eyes.

"Oh? I didn't know you had a sibling," Armin commented curiously.

"That's the weird part: I don't have a sister. Guess I just… dreamed of having one," Krista said with an awkward smile.

Armin opened his mouth, but paused suddenly with a startled look on his face.

"Armin, what's wr-?" Krista started, only to stop she felt it as well.

The ground rumbling beneath them. It was soft, but it was there, the walls shuddering..

Meanwhile

Hange let out a shuddering breath of awe as the great, golden mass began to stir with reptilian groans. She watched on as it rose to its feet, necks craning and flexing as vibrant green eyes revealed themselves to peer at the world once more. She immediately began to rapidly write sketches and notes now that she could see the creature in its full glory. The middle head have two frills along the back of its neck while the other two only had one, the way it stood with the tails used to counter balance the heads, the-

The large shadow that was blocking her light.

Hange froze, feeling the hot breath washing over her body. She slowly looked up and beheld those emerald eyes piercing her from atop a large snout. Distinctly intelligent eyes no less, in her opinion at least..

Slowly, deliberately, she rose from her seat, keeping her hands where they could be seen. To both sides of her, she could see the other two heads watching her as well. Curiously, she noticed that not only was this creature capable of facial expressions, but unless she was misreading the heads, each one was giving her very different looks. The one to her right appear actively curious, while the one on her left was more on guard and weary. The middle was the hardest to read. Thoughtful would be her guess.

She could be wrong, but there was a way to test that theory.

"Hello, Handsome!" Hange said with a smile.

She was rewarded with all the heads pulling back in surprise. She flushed, practically drooling as she realized this creature truly understood her. She quickly regathered herself, watching each head's surprise melt into a different reaction. The middle head tilted his head at her, while the suspicious one still looked taken back, and the curious one might just be amused with her now.

So, three different creatures in one body? Or were they just three parts of the same mind?

She was brought out of her musing as she realized the one to her right moving around to her backside, looking at her intently. She blinked as she looked down and realized what he was looking towards: her sketches. "Oh, do you want to see my handiwork?" Hange offered with a grin, turning to the front to show her sketch to the middle head, the other two moving closer to get a better look.

They leaned forward, just short of budding heads as they tried to take in the drawing.

"I hope you don't mind, but I couldn't help drawing you while you slept!" Hange called up cheerily.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei all regarded the strange woman and her sketch with interest. Of course, they already knew what they looked like. A perk of having three heads with long necks. Still, it was… interesting seeing themselves from the outside. Even if it was a bit hard to make out, the sketch being so small compared to themselves.

"Looks like nap time's over."

Speaking of small, another human swooped in on ODM gear and landed near the woman, having a perpetually severe look on his face. Eins stared at him intently, feeling a bit on edge.

"Levi! You're just in time to say good morning to our new friend," she greeted with a smile.

[[[Levi?]]]

[Why is that familiar?]

[[… Captain Levi.]]

[[[[The Strongest Human. The Strongest Scout.]]]]

"I'm not sure he likes me," Levi stated, eyes shifting between each of the heads keenly, but especially the creature's right head, which seemed to be eyeing him.

"I think that one is just grumpy," Hange retorted, waving her hand dismissively.

Levi rose an eyebrow as he saw the left head nodding in agreement.

Zwei perked up suddenly, head looking every which way for a moment before backing away from the roof, the other two heads scanning the area as well.

"What spooked him?" Hange asked in surprise.

"If I had to guess, I think he realized he's being watched," Levi remarked, watching as the beast's heads looked toward the top of the wall.

More precisely, the soldiers atop the wall, manning cannons aimed in his direction.

"He even knows what cannons are?" Hange murmured in interest.

[What are they doing?]

[[[Are they going to attack?]]]

[[They're just scared we'll attack first.]]

[So we do nothing?]

[[[They're not the enemy.]]]

[[We can probably dodge them anyway.]]

"I apologize for them."

The trio of heads glanced back toward the roof, and found a third human standing there now. A blond man with very big eyebrows, his stare intense.

"Erwin/Commander," Levi and Hange greeted as he walked between them.

"But some are still worried by your presence here," Erwin called out as the reptile turned to face them fully. Erwin was no fool though, he knew this being was keenly aware of the weapons still being pointed at him. "Despite that, I would like to offer thanks on behalf of humanity. Without you, Trost would have been lost."

Eins, Zwei, and Drei regarded him curiously, almost feeling awkward as they settled for a nod of acknowledgement. Even if they could speak, what do they even say to that?

"Tell me, do you have a plan to get out of here?" Erwin asked simply, getting a negative headshake. "I see. That was a very brave thing to do, trapping yourself in here."

Eins narrowed his eyes. When people said brave, sometimes they meant foolish. Was this a compliment or an insult?

Drei glare at him, wanting him to just accept the words at face value.

The trio of humans noticed the exchange with interest, and Erwin could tell by the stare that the middle head knew they noticed it as well.

"Would you have any interest in helping us further against the Titans?" Erwin questioned firmly.

All three heads nodded, their teeth showing their bloodlust for the Titans, Eins's especially.

Hange felt a chill down her spine as she saw what was clearly hatred in those eyes.

"Then we have common cause, against a common enemy," Erwin stated, as if some great agreement had been made. "I was asked to deliver a message as well, one I hope you understand: The soldiers are clearing the dead from the city, so try to be careful where you walk."

The trio of heads nodded in a calmer manner, and… Hange and Levi shared a look with one another, realizing that weren't imagining it. This creature's left head had a look of sorrow and sadness for the dead.

"Thank you, again," Erwin said as he turned to leave, walking to the other side of the roof, Hange and Levi falling in after him.

"See you soon, you beautiful beast!" Hange called over her shoulder.

But none of the heads acknowledged her this time. Instead, their eyes were keenly fixated on their backs, on their cloaks, on the symbol they wore:

The Wings of Freedom.

End of Chapter

The return of the anime rejuvinated my drive for all things AoT. Anyway, yes, this is largely a cooldown chapter, but setting up various things for later. And Hange absolutely gushing over Erendorah, who had no idea how to react to that.

Not much else to say: Ymir's in prinson, Mikasa is grieving, Krista is awake, and everyone is trying to figure out what to do with the massive titan-killing creature.

Until next time, have fun!

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 7

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

AN : *As a reminder:*

[Eins/Right Head]

[[Zwei/Middle Head]]

[[[Drei/Left Head]]]

[[[[All Three/Eren]]]]

I felt like I should repost that. Anyway, on with the show!

[[[We haven't changed back.]]]

They slowly wandered through the streets of Trost, their steps slow and deliberate as their gazes looked all about. Sometimes they crossed paths with a human, but most moved inside buildings before he came near. Some even waved to him.

[Maybe we can't.]

Eins sniffed the air as they paused, turning their gaze to the window of the second floor of a house. Drei let out a low roar while glancing behind. This had become a routine somehow, some soldier venturing out and ascending to the building in question. The female soldier was a little stiff from his presence, landing on the roof just below the window. She opened the window and peered inside before sighing loudly. "Damn bastard killed himself," she remarked before turning back to the three heads. "Thanks," she said awkwardly.

Eins grunted, Zwei nodded, and Drei made a short chirp of a roar. His way of saying, you're welcome. With that, they moved on, making sure not to venture down any roads with too much traffic.

[[Maybe it's better this way.]]

Eins seemed thoughtful at that, but Drei glared at the middle head, a small snarl on his maw.

[[[You want to abandon Mikasa and Armin?! Everyone else?!]]]

Their memories were mostly back now. Mostly. Their name was still fuzzy, but they remembered everything else: Their mother, the years living on their own, training, all the enjoyable annoyances of his fellow soldiers in training, and… his failure of a first battle.

[[We can protect them like this.]]

[We ripped Titans apart yesterday!]

Eins certainly saw the appeal points of Zwei's logic. As a human, they died without making any difference. As… this thing, they turned the entire tide, almost on their own. They saved their friends. And Armin, as usual, had a plan or two to help save the day. And it was nice being able to fight with Mikasa instead of her doing all the work. Sure, they were trapped in here for the moment, but there were a few ideas in Zwei's head if the humans couldn't figure anything out.

Still, Drei was unmoved, glaring at the other two defiantly.

[[[Titans aren't the only monsters.]]]

[[…]]

[…]

Eins looked away, pretending to be looking for another dead body while Zwei contemplated that point. They could destroy any regular Titan, but what could they do if a human became an enemy of their

friends and comrades? They couldn't get into Wall Rose without breaking the gate, and he doubted the humans would let them. And all they could really do was kill and terrify people, probably making a situation worse.

"Trips! Hey, Trips!"

They were pulled out of their mental debate by a familiar voice, turning to see Connie of all people zipping towards them with ODM gear.

Zipping a bit too fast, as Eins and Zwei craned their heads down and up respectively to avoid the human impacting with them. Drei, however, didn't move, resulting in Connie slamming into his snout.

"Oooooo, that hurt," Connie groaned, climbing on top of the snout, Drei crossing his eyes to stare at the amusing boy's antics. "Okay, not the best way to say hello," Connie said apologetically as he sat up, looking to the highly unamused heads of Eins and Zwei. "Sorry, sorry. I um, I'm on watch duty. As in, watching you," Connie explained.

Now all three were unamused.

"Hey, don't give me that look, it wasn't my idea," Connie said defensively before sighing as he stood, carefully given he was on Drei's snout still. ""Look, I just wanted to say hi, and that you were really awesome yesterday," Connie said with a grin, giving them a thumbs up.

Drei looked rather proud of that, while Eins was more smug than anything. Zwei accepted the praise patiently.

"And, well… I heard you were finding bodies," Connie said awkwardly. "It's… kind of morbid, but I'm hoping I can find… something of some friends of mine," Connie said with a shudder. "Lot of them got eaten before you showed up. Not that that's your fault, obviOUSLY!" Connie said correctly, his voice raising as he nearly

lost his balance but caught himself. He pointedly pretended like nothing happened, and the trio of heads were willing to ignore it. "Just really stinks. There was this one guy, he always went on about killing Titans. He'd have liked you," Connie said wistfully, "Just hard to believe that suicidal bastard of ours is actually dead."

Connie didn't notice the minute widening of the eyes, or the tensing of muscles beneath his feet.

"Sorry for unloading on you. Guess I just need to say that," Connie said as he zipped line off to a nearby building. "I'll be nearby for a couple hours!"

They didn't respond, didn't even watch him go.

[We need to find a way to turn back.]

Zwei looked to Eins and his abrupt change of opinion with a confused look, while Drei looked pleased with this development..

[[Why?]]

[They think we're dead!]

[[And?]]

[Armin and Mikasa think we're DEAD!]

[[I don't… oh.]]

[[[They think we already left them behind.]]]

[They need to at least know we're here.]

Eins's thoughts were more angry than concerned. Angry at himself, all three of himself for not realizing this problem. He could only imagine what Mikasa and Armin were going through.

[[Agreed. But if we change back, we might not be able to do this again.]]

[[[Then we'll find a way to do it again!]]]

[That is a fair point.]

Drei was annoyed with Eins being the one on the fence.

[[There's more than one way to communicate.]]

Drei was unmoved and Eins was still troubled.

They paused in their wandering again, realizing where their travels had brought them: the building they had helped Mikasa and the others get to, and slaughtered a lot of Titans around it. Despite their literal internal argument, they found this place pleasant. This place had a open area they could walk around more freely, and there shouldn't be any dead bodies around here.

There shouldn't be, that is.

"What are you up to, Trips?" Connie asked to himself as he watched the dragon's aimless wandering shift as it moved intently towards the building.

A low rumble of displeasure emanated from their throats. There was a familiar scent in the air, but not one they could place easily. Probably because they hadn't paid much attention to how people smelled as a human, for obvious reasons.

Still, it riled them, knowing they might lay their gaze on the corpse of a friend at any moment.

Eins's eyes narrowed as they circled around the building and found a hole in the side, where some Titans had tore into it before they arrived to slaughter the mindless creatures. All three heads craned up to peer inside it, not sure what to expect. A broke corpse, crushed

by the wall being smashed in? The partially eaten remains of a Titan meal? Another suicide?

All three stopped short as they caught sight of their query. It was a man, a soldier, limply seated in a chair. His right leg was missing, bitten off, and he had clearly bled out.

"Oh man," Connie said solemnly, having arrived through the hole to see the same sight. "Captain Woermann? What the hell was he doing over here?"

[[[That's the one that asked us to help first.]]]

[Damn. A Titan must have taken a bite of him and he managed to get here.]

[[… Where is his ODM gear?]]

Eins and Drei scowled as they realized Zwei was right.

[[[Maybe it was damaged?]]]

[Maybe he tried to stop the bleeding with the straps?]

[[Maybe.]]

The distinctive sound of ODM gear drew their attention away from the corpse as a very familiar female soldier appeared and landed on the wall next to them, watching him pointedly. "Everything okay in there?"

"Annie? What the hell are you doing here?" Connie called out.

"Hello to you too," Annie drawled. "Your friend here has been finding random corpses. They sent me over to see if they missed one over here."

"Yeah. A damn captain too," Connie answered with a sigh.

"Oh?" Annie asked, still watching the beast in front of her.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei stared at Annie idly as the conversation continued.

[She wasn't this worried about us when she helped us fight off that…]

[[Shifter. And no, she wasn't.]]

[[[Probably just a long day.]]]

When they considered the amount of bodies Annie might have helped clean up today, that made sense.

[[[[Yeah, that's probably it.]]]]

"You need me to help with move his… body?" Connie asked awkwardly. Collecting bodies was one things, but talking about it made it more so.

"No, Reiner and Bertholt will help me," Annie replied neutrally

"If you say so," Connie answered idly, coming back to the hole and looking towards Trips. "So, what, you going to lay down for another nap?"

Nap, no. Sitting down for a moment?

Annie tensed as she watched and felt the reptilian giant tilt back and fall onto its rear as gently as possible with its legs sliding forward.

[[… I don't think this body is build for sitting.]]

[[[It's not too bad.]]]

[At least we don't have to worry about sitting on our balls.]

Drei and Zwei gave Eins strange looks. It was true, technically, but still.

"Guess the big man is taking a break," Connie mused. "I'll be on the roof if you guys need help."

"Right," Annie said with a frown as she leapt off the building to return to her comrades. But she couldn't fight off the growing suspicion in her mind. 'The way it stared at me, and it chose to stay. Does it know what we are? Can it sense us? Smell us?'

Eins's maw formed a snarl of distaste.

[I swear I still feel Titans nearby.]

[[Maybe it takes some time to fade after they die.]]

[[[Maybe it's just because they're keeping the Shifter nearby?]]]

[[Depends on where they're keeping her.]]

[Would they leave her on this side of the wall with how fast she is?]

[[Perhaps, if they want to leave her on the same side of the wall as us.]]

[[[… Who was that, anyway?]]]

The three grew silent in mind. They had avoided musing on that topic so far.

[[Ymir.]]

[..?]

[[[Are you sure?]]]

[[The Shifter attacked us after we saved Krista.]]

[[[And Krista was the only one Ymir cared about.]]]

[Most of the other boys were in love with her too.]

[[[Like Ymir was?]]]

[[[[Definitely not.]]]]

That conclusion reached led to the other implications. If someone he trained beside for years was a Titan Shifter, than any of the others could be too. And, as much as Eins and Drei hated it, Zwei knew it made sense. They could have slipped in easy with the chaos after the Walls fell.

[[There's just one problem.]]

[There are a LOT of problems with this!]

[[[Not what we meant.]]]

[[If the Armor and Colossal Titans are about the same age as Ymir, they'd be children five years ago, same as us.]]

Eins stopped at that while concern went through Drei.

[Maybe they can just change how old they look?]

[[[That's not too crazy.]]]

[[Not as crazy as finding out Shifters exist at all, no. But if they can't, these years of hell were unleashed by a couple of children.]]

[I don't care. We'll still kill them.]

[[[[Agreed!]]]]

[[But something about this reeks.]]

Eins and Drei conceded that. The more they chipped away at the implications of the situation, of the Titans Shifters, the more strange the bigger picture became.

It didn't take long before Annie returned with Reiner and Bertholt. "You guys go ahead, I think I'll say hello real quick," Reiner said with a smile.

"Wait, R-" Bertholt called after, but the blond male was already changing course.

"Idiot," Annie muttered to herself, hoping he didn't do anything stupid or, more importantly, crazy.

"Well, you're looking better, Scales," Reiner called as he landed down on the ground, a short distance from where the golden figure sat.

[[[Reiner.]]]]

[Crazy bastard, landing on my head in the middle of a fight.]

[[He's crazier standing there. Our tails might take his head off on accident.]]

The trio of heads regarded their friend with various degrees of fondness.

"Glad you remember me," Reiner said with a chuckle. "Don't know what anyone told you, but we got that biting bitch locked up."

They had guessed as much, but it was nice to be kept in the loop.

"We're not suppose to be talking about her, but I think you can keep a secret," Reiner said with a smirk.

[[[[Asshole.]]]]

They snorted their agreement.

Reiner laughed a bit at that. "A sense of humor too!" Reiner said in amusement. "Anyway, it's good to see you, Scales. And thanks for the help. I… also don't know what the hell you even eat, but given your fangs, I think we should be happy you're not munching on the dead."

Reiner zipped off back to the building before the trio could compute that last part.

Eat humans, even dead ones? Drei shuddered in disgust while Eins looked both shocked and offended. But Zwei looked curious.

[[Now that I think about it…]]

[[[No.]]]

[Hell no! Unless it's a Shifter.]

[[[Maybe!]]]

[[Not what I meant!]]

Zwei glared at the two accusing heads on either side of him.

[[But what do we eat?]]

[[[…?]]]

[Titans?]

[[You know that doesn't count.]]

[[[Maybe it does? We haven't eaten anything in almost a full day now.]]]

[We're not hungry either.]

[[Point, I suppose? Maybe we just don't need to eat?]]

[Wait, don't Titans need sunlight?]

[[That was what we were taught, yes?]]

[Maybe it's the same for us?]

[[That would explain it. We did sleep through the night and most of the morning.]]

They decided to end their inner conversation there, rising to their feet once more, their tails swinging about to get the circulation going properly. They froze as the end of their tail scrapped a building, tearing into the side.

"Everything alright out there?!" Bertholt yelled, suddenly rushing to the hole to look out.

"Yeah, it's good!" Connie called down from the ceiling. "Trips just nipped a building with one of his tails."

"If that's the first time he's done that, I'm impressed," Annie murmured, helping Reiner carry the body out of the room.

The three heads gave a collective grunt before trotting on. They eventually began walking around the streets nearest Wall Rose. There were few bodies here, but there were plenty of craters in the ground from when the cannons had been shooting into the Titans. Titan corpses might vanish, but the damage certainly didn't.

Just as before, soldiers reacted to his passing in various ways. But it was more positive here, many outright cheering from the walls as they passed. Drei watched, giving a roar of appreciation, and even saw Commander Pixis giving him a salute.

Cannons were also aimed in his general direction wherever he went, though he was amused to see some of the soldiers giving the ones manning the cannons a hard time about it.

"Do you really want to be the one that shot the Golden Titankiller?!" one, possibly drunken soldier called with a laugh.

[… Golden Titankiller…]

[[[I will take Trips over that.]]]

[[I'll take Scales, thank you.]]

[[[… Couldn't we spell out what to call us?]]]

They paused in their stride, all three heads glancing at one another curiously before continuing on.

[[It's possible. Not easy, but possible.]]

[Be easier if we remembered our damn name.]

[[[Why is that blanking out on us still!?]]]

[[We're a giant lizard with three heads, that is the least surprising part of this.]]

[Agre- What is that?]

Eins was already snarling a bit while Drei cocked his head, trying to make out the sound. It sounded like… groaning. But it was much too loud to be a human.

[[[[Titans!]]]]

All at once, their stride became quicker, more intent. They followed the roads in the western corner in the back of Trost. Low and behold, there they were: two Titans.

But they were bound in heavy bindings, and giant nails were impaled through their bodies to keep them pinned and unable to attack anyone.

They were also surrounded by soldiers, all with the green cloaks bearing the Wings of Freedom.

"Oh, shit, there it is," Gunther said in shock, paling as he saw the massive beast coming towards them with many fangs showing. "And he doesn't look happy."

"What do we do?" Petra asked, voicing the concern of everyone else here. "We were not to engage that thing under any circumstances."

"It's only here for these two," Eld pointed out, keeping his limbs tense and ready while nodding to the two captured titans. "It's probably just here to finish the clean up."

"Yeah, but we need these two alive for Section Commander Four-Eyes," Olou said, trying to look cool and aloof. "Just don't back down, and we should be fine."

"Acting like the Captain will not help here!" Petra said pointedly.

"Oh, you sure?" Olou asked, forcing himself to smirk as he walked forward, trying to radiate confidence. "Hey, you! With the scaly ass!"

They stopped, glancing down at the rather brazen soldier.

"I hear you're a bit of the bite-first, ask question later type," Olou said, keeping himself from shaking as best he could. "But I can't have… you… munching… on…"

The Scout trailed off as all three heads craned down, until the middle one's snout was mere meters from himself. A burst of hot, very hot air burst from the nostrils, knocking Olou back on his rear.

And making him bite his tongue. "Ahh, fuck!"

Petra sighed as her comrades shook their heads.

Zwei jerked back in surprise, watching the man hold his bleeding mouth.

[[[I want to feel bad, but I can't]]]

[I don't want to, and I still don't.]

[[Should they be worried about him bleeding out?]]

"Don't worry, he does that a lot."

The three heads craned over to find Hange sitting atop of a nearby roof, smiling brightly at him.

"Having a nice stroll, Gorgeous?"

[[[[Annnnd she's back.]]]]

"Section Commander?!" Gunther called up.

"It's okay, I'll take it from here," Hange called back in assurance before bringing her full attention back to, in her mind, the greatest discovery of mankind.

They were of one mind about Hange. On one hand, it was nice to have someone talking to them without fear or worry, even enjoying talking to him. On the other, she was a bit… intense.

"Mind taking a walk with me, Big Boy?" Hange requested playfully.

They felt that, if they were human, they'd be even more off put by this. But they decided to indulge her, following alongside Hange as she led them away from the corner of Trost.

"I understand you're eager to kill Titans," Hange started off, taking long strides, while her companion took the slowest steps possible to keep pace with her. "Believe me, I get it. I used to be like that too."

[[[[Used to be?]]]]

Hange contained a squeal of excitement as she saw the three heads peer at her with obvious curiosity and interest. "However, I have to

ask you not to attack my new friends back there."

They both stopped walking, the three heads giving her their undivided attention, which she returned in kind.

"Humans are weak, pathetic, fragile creatures," Hange said without hesitation, her tone level and stern. "I'm sure something like you can't understand how pitiful we are compared to the Titans, or you obviously. Even without your intellect, I would still stake a guess on you being superior even to the Armored or Colossal Titans."

Drei preened at that while Eins gained a touch of smugness at the ego stroke. Zwei just stared, waiting for the explanation.

"But we humans have only our brains. Our only chance to stand against the Titans is to learn more about them, understand them. And to that end, I need them alive to study," Hange explained, staring him intently in the eye. "So please, my friend, leave them to my care."

Zwei looked amused, nodding his consent on behalf of all three of them. There was no debate, nothing to discuss. If it was to help humans against Titans, then he would suffer those two to live, for now.

Hange instantly traded in her serious expression for a wide grin as she flushed and… was definitely, definitely drooling now. "Oh, I wish I could know what was going on in those heads of yours! The stories you could tell."

[[[She's going to be a bit disappointed if she finds out we were just a cadet before this.]]]

[[I don't think she* can *be disappointed by us.]]

[I almost feel bad for the shifter.]

[[[[Almost.]]]]

With that, the Titan-Slayer turned to retrace his path and put distance between him and the Titans. He had no desire to be near Titans he wasn't going to kill.

"T-thanks for the save, Section Commander," Olou said, a quiver of fear still in his breath as Hange descended to join the Levi Squad.

Hange took one look at him and had one thing to say. "Olou, go change your pants before Levi sees, or Titans forbid, smells you."

The rest of the day went rather uneventfully for the behemoth. Connie switched out for Sasha, Sasha for Annie. After her, the higher ups apparently decided they didn't need someone watching them all the time. The one thing that troubled all three of his heads was, eventually, who they didn't see.

[[[[Mikasa and Armin.]]]]

[[[We've seen everyone else.]]]

[Even Horseface.]

[[[Except Christa]]]

[[Perhaps they're just helping in the areas we've avoided?]]

That was more likely than it seemed at first. There was a good third of Trost they didn't go into, where most of the soldiers were finding and collecting bodies. They stayed out of the way, not wanting to disturb or worsen the already grim task these soldiers were dealing with.

[[[Maybe they're working on the other side of the wall?]]]

[[Maybe?]]

Zwei was the brains of the three, but he wasn't sure what else they would be doing on the other side of the wall after beating back the Titans for the first time.

He glanced to the western length of Trost's wall, Eins and Drei doing so as well.

[[[[The sun will be setting soon.]]]]

Indeed, it wasn't long before the sun began to fall behind the great structure. And yet, as shadows fell over the city, they did not find themselves growing tired or weary. Not only did that put a dent in their theory about their body being powered by sunlight, it also meant that the night could become incredibly boring.

More importantly…

"So, he can see in the dark?" Erwin asked idly as he stood on the wall, Hange seated near a torch with her notebook in hand. They both stared down into Trost, the darkness of night broken by the lights of torches and fires. There was just enough light to make out the great shadow moving about the city.

"Something like that," Hange answered thoughtfully. "Perhaps he can see heat, or something else."

"Good. Our friend has been mindful around humans, so we hopefully won't have any accidental deaths to report," Erwin remarked.

Indeed, Zwei had initially assumed they just saw better as this… creature than as a human, but the later it grew, the more they realized their vision should be growing dark with the lack of light. Instead, they could still see. Mostly. Colors had largely faded or dulled away entirely to black and white, but they could see… something else.

A strange color they didn't know how to describe, one that surrounded the humans, giving them a strange glow of sorts.

[Why do we only have this now?]

[[We might not have noticed in the light.]]

[[[And we were kind of busy yesterday.]]]

Still, this was a rather helpful boon for them. At least they weren't likely to step on some unlucky soul in the dark.

Their eyes traveled to a large light burning in the city. They were no fool, they knew that was where the bodies were being burned. They had planned to stay away, to let those souls be put to rest in what little peace a mass bonfire could give.

But… they told themselves it was just to see if the light of the fires affected their vision, but they knew they wanted to go anyway. Even if no one knew who they were, it felt wrong to be absent. After all, his teammates were in that fire too.

So, with careful steps, he treaded to the pyres as softly as possible.

It didn't take long for them to reach the street, peering down at the fires with soldiers standing about to pay their respects.

[[The glow is fainter around the fire.]]

[[[Shut up.]]]

[[…]]

[There they are.]

Zwei and Drei followed Eins's gaze and saw who he meant, their friends: Sasha, Connie, Jean, Marco, Reiner, Annie, and…

[[[[Armin.]]]]

"What the hell is he doing here?" Jean asked, frowning at the shadowed figure of their scaled ally, green eyes glinting in the darkness.

"Calm down, he probably just wanted to see what the fire was about," Marco assured placatingly. "See, it's not like he's coming

closer."

"Give him a break guys," Sasha said with a sigh. "Trips was saving us all day yesterday. He's probably sad too, that they died."

"You think Scales cares about people he's never even met before?" Reiner asked with a distant tone to his voice.

"Guys, can we just… shut up about Trips for a moment," Connie said, sitting down with a hand to his head. "This is… suppose to be about them tonight," he said, looking to the flames solemnly.

"Yeah," Armin said under his breath, staring aimlessly at the flames.

[… !]

[[[…]]]

Oh, what they would give at the moment just to be able to speak, to call out to his first friend that he was still here, right here. For all his bluster, Eins felt closer to tears than Drei. Tears of frustration, but still. They weren't even sure if they could cry in this body.

They froze as another figure approached the pyres.

"You came," Armin greeted with a small, sad smile.

Mikasa just nodded mutely, eyes transfixed on the fires, even as everyone stared at her.

Everyone.

[She's been crying.]

[[She looks exhausted.]]

[[[…]]]

Drei let out a low, sorrowful groan that briefly echoed across the streets.

The young soldiers looked on in surprise, but didn't react beyond that. It was strange to accept that this great creature was in mourning with them, but it became easier to believe by the minute.

Mikasa looked to those eyes, gleaming in the night, their color so much like Eren's that it almost hurt. She pulled the scarf close to her face, savoring everything about it: its warmth, its texture, all of it.

"Thank you, Eren, for everything," Mikasa whispered. So softly that no one could hear her over the cackling of the flames. No one save Armin, who looked to her with empathy. "You can rest now. You're free."

Taking a deep breath, she stepped forward.

[What is she doing?]

[[She's walking to the fire.]]

[[[Why?]]]

[[[[Mikasa?]]]]

For a rare time, the three heads were in perfect unison of being for more than a single instance or decision. For there were no thoughts, only a strange numbness as they watched Mikasa stop in front of the fires, completely ignoring the heat, and slowly unwrapping her scarf, everyone staring in silent shock.

Everyone.

She folded it neatly in her hands, reaching it towards the flames, ready to throw it into the fire.

[[[[Mikasa!]]]]

All at once, a wind rushed through the streets, the flames nearly going horizontal. And in that instance, the gust had ripped away the scarf into the air before Mikasa could close her hands.

"Where did that come from?" Connie said in surprise. "It wasn't from Trips' side of the street…"

"Oh no, I think it might rain," Sasha said with a frown as she looked up.

Mikasa ignored them, running to the edge off the light, looking frantically for her scarf.

"Mikasa, I'll grab a torch!" Armin called, looking around for a piece of wood he could use.

"Here, I got-" Jean said, having turned to fetch one when the scarf had left Mikasa's hands. He stopped, and all grew silent at the soft shaking of the ground.

The figure of the three headed beast loomed ever closer now, but its eyes were low to the ground. Or as low as they could be.

Armin inhaled sharply, and his comrades were left speechless as the heads creeped out of the darkness and brought themselves into the light.

And from the middle head, a long tongue stuck out. A tongue that was curled and holding a red scarf rather awkwardly.

"No way…" Marco breathed.

"Wow. I… just wow," Sasha summarized.

"Wait…" Armin said with a shuddering breath, eyes dilating as he looked at the green-eyed beast, holding the scarf while all three heads starred at Mikasa, and only Mikasa. "It can't be…"

Mikasa's disbelief melted away into a soft, stoic expression. "Thank you," she said quietly, but she was sure she was heard. Carefully, she reached out to retake the scarf.

Zwei pulled back, barely, making her blink. She looked to either side in confusion as Eins and Drei crooned at her with shrill voices.

"What the hell is this about?" Annie asked, trying to keep the nervousness off her face.

"Armin? You okay?" Jean asked, seeing the boy's shoulders shaking.

"I… I don't understand," Mikasa said, feeling at a loss for what was going on.

Eins and Drei looked to Zwei imploringly, who closed his eyes in…

Anger? Frustration? What was that look on the reptile's face, Mikasa wondered.

Zwei's eyes opened, and inched closer to Mikasa. She was about to reach out again, when the tongue brought the scarf beyond her hand, and-

Mikasa felt lightning crawling up her spine as the tongue began to move the scarf around her.

It was slow, sloppy, and a bit wet. The tongue all but threw the last end of the scarf on her head.

"The hell…?" Jean said under his breath in disbelief. "There's… there's no way.'"

"It's him. I don't know how, but it's him," Armin said, tears running down his eyes.

Mikasa stood there silently, numbly while gazing up at the eyes. Those too-familiar, green eyes. Eyes that held such anger, such hate, but something softer and more beautiful as well. Eyes now

filled with a longing, sadness, as if begging her to understand what they… he was trying to say to her.

Her voice almost died in her throat, as if saying it aloud might just choke her to utter it. Her eyes welled with renewed tears, and one word left her lips. One name.

"Eren?"

Eins, Zwei, and Drei all crooned around her in happiness, relief, remorse, and a thousand other emotions.

[[[[We remember now. Our name. My name. Eren.]]]]

"Did she just… call him…?" Marco said quietly.

"That suicidal bastard," Jean said, gritting his teeth as he held back his own tears.

"Wait… what?" Connie said with a frown. "I don't…"

Mikasa ignored them all as she clutched onto the middle nose, sobbing into the snout.

All three heads let out noises. Hearing his name made him feel like he had truly reclaimed his memories, and all the emotions that they inspired. And as Mikasa cried into him, Eren had only one thought.

[[[[I need to change back.]]]]

End of Chapter

There you are, a day in the life of Erendorah. I didn't go into this planning on the chapter JUST showing what life is like for Erendorah, but I liked it too much to not do it. Naturally, some people are weary of Eren, but most are apprecitive. Hange is Hange, as always. But instead of Marco, its fucking Kitz that died suspiciously. I hinted this a chapter or two ago, but I don't think anyone picked up on it.

And yes, the Kaiju is out of the bag. Could I have dragged this out a bit longer? Eh, yeah, but it wouldn't have added anything to the story. So, they know that Trips is actually Eren now. However, while Eren has resolved to get his human form back, how he gets it is still an issue. We'll be exploraing that next chapter, among other things.

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 8

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

"Eren?!" Connie exclaimed in shock, looking between the gold beast and the others. "Trips is Eren!? The hell!?"

"Be a little louder, I don't think everyone in Sina heard you," Jean muttered numbly, hand over his face.

"If I hadn't seen Ym-the Titan Shifter yesterday, I wouldn't believe it," Marco mused under his breath.

"That's… that's Eren?" Reiner whispered with a shuddering breath, a panic swelling in his chest.

Annie stepped closer to Reiner with a very, very pale expression as she grabbed his arm sharply, her nails digging into his skin. Reiner winced and almost yelled at her before regaining his composure before anyone noticed.

All the while, Mikasa rested against the nose of Eren's middle head, absorbed in his loud yet rhythmic breathing.

But the other two heads now looked to the group watching them. Or, more exactly, Armin.

The blonde approached, his feet moving before he even knew what he was doing. His pace was slow, but from disbelief instead of fear. He had already known the three headed entity meant them no harm. Knowing it was Eren just confirmed that. Still, it was too surreal, as if this might be a dream he'd awaken from at any moment. But if this was real, it raised so many more questions.

Eren's left most head leaned down towards Armin as Mikasa retracted from the snout, keeping one hand on it as she turned to face Armin as well.

Armin couldn't remember the last time Mikasa smiled like that, so true and overflowing with happiness, even if her eyes were still stained with tears. "How…" Armin swallowed, looking up at the head nearest him. "How is this possible?" he asked, slowly reaching out to touch the golden scales.

He almost gasped, and almost laughed, as he saw what might be a smile on this head, as Eren tilted it briefly to indicate its lack of answer.

"O-okay, um… Guys?" Sasha spoke up, and the right most head gave her an annoyed look that made her flinch. "W-what do we do now?"

"That's a good question, Cadet Blouse!"

Everyone looked to the rooftops and saw three other Scouts standing up there with curious and suspicious looks, one obviously being the leader.

Eren just gave the speaker an unamused look with all three heads. He was growing far too used to this one.

"Hey, it's you! The Scout Commander with the drawings!" Sasha recalled, scrunching her brow. "Hanget?"

"Hange," she corrected patiently as she descended from the roof before turning to the two standing nearest their giant ally. "So, I take it you two know something about this handsome devil, eh?" she asked with a grin.

Mikasa had a rather dark look about her eyes, her stare boring into Hange's… until Eren's middle head nudged her in the back. She

blinked, turning to see the head was giving her a knowing, scolding look.

Everyone watched with confusion, and amusement in Hange's case, as the right head made a shrill sound that might be a laugh while the left head growled in annoyance at the other.

"He's actually arguing with himself," Jean said under his breath. "Why is that the most believable part of this?"

Armin looked nervously from the scout to Mikasa and Eren… until he caught the middle head's stare. It was pointed, giving him a slow and deliberate nod.

Armin's eyes widened in understanding. Eren wanted him to tell this woman who he was. Steeling himself, he wiped away his tears and turned to Hange with a salute. "Ma'am. I have information to report regarding the…" Armin paused, realizing that there was no official designation for… whatever Eren had become.

"The absolutely gorgeous specimen behind you, yes," Hange filled in with a smile, waving him on eagerly.

Armin was more than a bit bewildered by that description, but decided not to question it as he felt the amused snort of breath from Eren hitting his backside. "We believe we now know his identity."

Hange grew silent, the flames casting a glare onto her goggles. "Is that so?" she asked with utmost seriousness. "I would ask, but I can assume by the looks on your faces that this was a rather… recent discovery," she summarized.

Eren's heads eyed her intently. Eins with warning, Zwei with wariness and Drei with concern.

"You two!" Hange called, her gaze snapping back to the Scouts on the roof. "Report back to the Commander, tell him that I need a meeting with himself and Commander Pixis!"

"Ma'am!" they saluted before flying off on their gear.

Hange waited a moment before turning to the cadets nearby. "I assume you all already know as well?"

"Yeah? Why, is this some government secret?" Connie asked in confusion.

"Not yet, but it might be best not to let this spread," Hange said before turning to Armin again. "What are your names, Cadets?"

"Armin Artlert, Ma'am," Armin answered dutifully.

"Mikasa Ackerman," Mikasa answered simply, still eyeing Hange somewhat.

Hange nodded, filing their names to memory. "Tell me."

Armin took a deep breath. "His name is Eren Yeager, of the 104th."

It was very telling that Hange didn't look at all surprised by that information. "So, you are human," Hange said, glancing to Eren with a rather knowing look on her face.

"Wait, what?" Jean spoke up, scowling through his shock. "You already knew that? How the hell?"

"It was mostly suspicion, but it was starting to become rather strange," Hange elaborated, never taking her eyes off Eren. "Understanding the human language is one thing, but you knew too many concepts to have not been living among humans at some point."

Eren didn't deny that. He hadn't exactly been trying to hide who or what he was before.

"He was… is in my squad," Armin continued when Hange looked to him again. "We thought he was… dead, Ma'am."

Eren's left head let out a low rumble that somehow sounded apologetic. Armin and Mikasa stared in surprise before smiling.

"I feel like we're intruding on something private," Marco whispered awkwardly.

"Shhhh!" Sasha said, watching with rapid attention.

"Dead, not missing," Hange noted after a brief pause.

Armin flinched. "I… saw him get eaten by a Titan," Armin answered, his head bowed in shame.

Hange's eyes widened, and it seemed as though she might lunge at the boy and start shooting a thousand new things she wanted to ask. But she restrained herself, if barely. Clearing her throat, she turned her attention back to Eren. "I suppose if you knew how to change back, you would have already?"

Eren's middle head nodded firmly, his left head growling in displeasure.

"Which is going to make getting anything besides yes or no answers from you a problem," Hange said with a sigh, looking from Mikasa and Armin, to the other cadets nearby. "It should go without saying that there is a gag order on this information until the higher ups decide otherwise. Understood?"

They all took a moment to regather themselves, but the cadets all gave their murmurs of "Yes, Ma'am."

"Good. Now, as much as I'd like to pull an all-nighter, you should all turn in for the night. There will be more work in the morning even if we don't have questions for all of you," Hange instructed.

"I'm staying," Mikasa said with a deadly serious tone.

Hange sighed, wondering how to approach this. It didn't take a genius to know that Mikasa had been close to the human Eren had

been. "Listen, I wouldn't mind trying to take a nap on his golden backside either, but now isn't really the time."

"… Did she really just say that?" Connie asked, feeling utterly lost now.

Jean gave a look to Eren, at least the left most head, who caught his look out of the corner of his eye. Jean pointed to Hange with a look of dread and questioning.

Eren just nodded as subtly as possibly, indicating that yes, Hange was always like this in his experience.

"I'm staying," Mikasa repeated, a dark look in her eyes.

Everyone grew tense at the little stand off- which caused even Hange to jump in alarm when Eren slammed one of his tails on the ground. Not too hard, but enough to spook them.

"Dammit, Trips! You're going to give me a heart attack at this rate!" Connie yelled, clutching his chest.

"You're still calling him Trips," Annie pointed out, the least startled of the bunch.

"I don't give a damn right now!" Connie retorted in frustration.

The trio of friends, plus the scientist, ignored the others as they looked up at the golden beast. "Eren?" Mikasa asked in confusion.

Eren's heads were giving her a rather stern look, with the right being more annoyed and the left being more… concerned? Reluctant? Exasperated?

Reptilian facial expressions weren't anyone's specialty.

The middle head nodded Mikasa in Hange's direction, his meaning fairly obvious now. "No, I'm not leaving you again!" Mikasa insisted.

"Mikasa…" Armin said softly, knowing this was hard for her. He blinked as the heads looked towards him, growling something before the middle head nodded pointedly to something. Armin followed the direction, until he realized Eren wasn't nodding to Hange. But rather, to the pyre behind her. He scrunched his brow, looking to Eren again, who nodded meaningfully to Mikasa and flames. "Ohhhhhh," Armin said in understanding.

"Hm? Do you know what he's trying to say?" Hange asked with interest.

"I think he's saying Mikasa should go since the corpses haven't been cleared out of Trost?" Armin tried, looking to Eren as he continued. "And he's worried she'll get sick sleeping in Trost?"

The left head nodded, one of their tails coming around to actually point at Armin, who instinctively stepped back at the sudden action, but smiled at realizing he had read his friend correctly.

"Awww, that's actually kind of sweet," Sasha said with a smile. Which turned sheepish under the annoyed look of the right head.

Mikasa looked both touched by the sentiment, while wanting to refute the concern.

Hange stroked her chin, seeing the girl's continued reluctance. "If it makes you feel any better, you'll probably be the main one assigned to watching him after tonight," she offered, which did seem to relieve Mikasa somewhat.

Eren's heads shared a look. Mikasa with official guard duty over him. Great. On the bright side, she couldn't even try to drag him away now.

With great reluctance on Mikasa's part, the young soldiers dispersed, still trying to come to grips with this new revelations.

Meanwhile

Bertholt knew something was wrong the moment the moment he saw Annie enter the room. Reiner was… unpredictable, and it was not always easy to tell if he was talking to the soldier or the warrior. But Annie? Her pale face and empty eyes told him that their mission just got a lot harder than it already was.

"What is it?" he asked quietly.

Reiner sat down with a pensive face. "It's Eren," he said bluntly, vaguely, ominously.

Bertholt blinked. But Eren died, didn't he? "He survived? That's, well, good I guess?" he tried, not sure why they were spooked yet.

"Bertholt," Annie said coldly. " ***It*** is Eren."

He furrowed his brow at the emphasis before understanding shook him to his very core, draining the color from his face. "You mean… that thing…?" he stammered. At their looks, he buried his face in his hands. Eren was that… creature. That wrathful, powerful, titan-killing creature. "Are you sure?"

"It wrapped the scarf around Mikasa, with its tongue," Annie explained bluntly.

"Shit," Bertholt hissed. He should have tried taking it… him out when he had the chance. "How is that possible? The Beast Titan is back in Marley."

"The Nine had to have spread off from the Founder. Maybe he's a new, tenth shifter?" Reiner remarked grimly. "But that raises more questions than answers. Only the Cart could last this long, and no Titan heals like that, with no steam or anything."

Annie sat in silence for a moment. "He's stuck in Trost if he can't change back. He's not an issue, yet," Annie pointed out. "Nobody suspects us for now."

"What about Ymir?" Bertholt asked with a frown. "I mean, would she… remember us?"

Reiner and Annie flinched, remembering the day Marcel died. It was possible she did. Memories from their time as a Pure Titan were strange things, brief as they were. Annie had flashes of eating her predecessor, while Reiner had no memory of it all. How long had Ymir even been a Pure Titan?

"I'm pretty sure she does, by the look on her face when I saved her from getting eaten," Annie remarked.

"Even if she does, I don't think she's said anything yet," Reiner countered. "Either way, we need to find out where they're holding her."

"But… that might give us away. They'd suspect anyone snooping about for her to be other shifters," Berthold reasoned cautiously.

"Fuck. He's right," Annie said with a sigh. "Even if she doesn't say anything, Ymir screwed us with that reveal."

"Why wouldn't she say anything though? About anything?" Reiner wondered. "They obviously don't trust her after that stunt."

Annie paused. "Ymir might be an idiot but she's not dumb. She probably figured out that the ones in power don't want the truth to get out. But the ones not in the loop will still try and interrogate her."

"So, we have some time to figure that out," Reiner mused. "For now, we keep an eye on everything. It'll be hard to keep Ymir completely a secret, but if Eren does turn back? This all gets a lot more complicated."

"Do you think you two could beat him? Or…?" Bertholt paused meaningfully, wondering if he'd have to use his destructive transformation to deal with such a foe.

"Hard to say," Annie said with a scowl. "He seems to be tough as shit, but no arms has to be a handicap. But I have no idea how his teeth do against our hardening."

"There is a more important question, actually," Reiner said with a scowl.

Annie raised an eyebrow. "What are you talking about?"

"What happens if we kill him?" Reiner questioned.

Bertholt looked confused while Annie narrowed her eyes. "What?"

"If he dies, will another devil get that power?" Reiner elaborated. "Or does it die with him? If not, how would we take it from him?"

Bertholt looked down. Reiner had a point. If Eren's powers worked like a Titan's in any way, that might mean that a newborn would get the power. Or, more importantly, that they could steal it by… devouring Eren, his true body within that creature. But where would it be, with three different necks, all of them so long?

"Reiner," Annie said with a sigh. "If there was ever a time to consider jumping ship and just reporting what we know, this would be the time."

Reiner had to admit, Annie had a point. Even more than usual. However…"If we go awol now, they'll probably figure out it was us. And we'll have no chance at finding the coordinates."

Annie didn't like it, but she conceded that point.

"If things start to go south again, we go home," Reiner decided. "But I think we need to take a shot at him before we turn tail and run. Or we might find ourselves replaced very quickly."

They all grew silent at that. None of them said it, but they all knew it. None of them wanted to continue this course, but they had few other options and had to tread carefully to keep their secret now.

They were in a bind.

The Next Day

Ymir was in a bind.

She knew it, and she knew she had to do something about that. The trouble was, she wasn't entirely sure what option would fuck her over the least.

Option one, say nothing to anyone. Probably lead to them torturing her for information and then killing her to try and understand her powers as a Titan Shifter. She could try to escape in there, they were bound to fuck up at least once. Hopefully. But even if she did get out of here, where would she even go? It's not like there was any place in the outside world for her. Marley would just have her eaten to get their Titan back, and almost anywhere else would be a death sentence.

Option two, spill her guts to the people of the walls. Honestly, on its face, it was the better idea. She tells the truth about this messed up lie they lived under, and she probably wins enough good will to not get executed. The only problem? The lie itself. The people of the walls truly believed that they were the last of humanity, that the Titans had conquered everything. They didn't even know that Titans were their own kind, or that the Eldian Empire existed. Even if it had been a hundred years ago, it was impossible for knowledge and history of that scale to be completely suppressed and destroyed.

Which only meant one thing: Titan-fuckery was a foot.

She had come from the age just after the Eldian Empire fell, when the memory of it was still ripe for everyone. Tales of the Founding Titan, the King's Titan, were still whispered in awe and terror. It made these walls, walls made of Colossal titans. If the legends were true, it had made all Eldians immune to a plague once. What else could it do? Erasing the entire memories of a group of people didn't seem unlikely.

So, the King of the Walls wanted the truth to remain hidden, or whoever was really in charge now did. And the Founding Titan hadn't done anything to stop the Fall of Wall Maria. What could that mean? Ymir wasn't sure, but it summed up her problem with telling the truth.

Either the Founding Titan was still in play and telling the truth would bring its wrath upon her, or it was out of commission somehow. If so, she doubted there was any future for the people behind these walls. If Marley sent four of their seven Shifters to this island, they were playing for keeps. And if she told the truth, that would just put her on Marley's shit-list even more, if they ever cared to find out the people here didn't know anything.

So, say nothing and hope for an opening, or throw her lot in with a doomed cause? What wonderful choices.

Speaking of wonderful choices, she was starting to prefer her other guards over Levi. She could at least get a reaction out of them if she wanted, he just kept giving her this stare like he was debating which limb to cut off.

All while drinking tea.

"Who the hell holds a cup like that anyway?" Ymir asked with a sigh.

Levi didn't answer, but she felt him taking another sip was somehow mocking her.

"Seriously, is that a nobility thing or something? Were you some pampered brat before you became a badass?" Ymir asked with a smirk.

Levi's eyes narrowed, just a bit, and Ymir suddenly felt he was adding her tongue to the list of options to cut off from her body.

"You know, I heard what you said the other day. How's it feel to be the strongest human and stuck on babysitting duty?" Ymir inquired

with a chuckle. "Got to admit, that'd suck a bit, but at least it gives you a chance to drink."

"I'm actually disappointed," Levi said idly. "It took you only a day for your boredom to get to you."

"Hey, I tried counting the bricks in the ceiling, but it lost its appeal after the eleventh time," Ymir countered sarcastically.

Their conversation stopped as footsteps filled the air, prompting Levi to look off to the side. "Well, congrats. Things are about to get more interesting for you."

Ymir scowled. She didn't like the way he said that, and it made her feel all the more tense as the steps grew louder in her ears until-

SLAM!

Ymir nearly jumped out of her bed as a woman appeared, having slammed her hands against the bars, staring at Ymir with an unnerving intensity, before melting into a too-friendly smile. "And how are we today?"

"The fuck is wrong with you people?!" Ymir yelled, catching her breath.

"So, you're Ymir," Hange greeted, completely unbothered. "I'm Hange Zoe. I see you've met my gloomy friend."

"Get on with it, Four-Eyes," Levi said calmly.

"Great. Let me guess, you talk too much because he doesn't talk enough?" Ymir asked sarcastically.

Hange just chuckled. "Sorry, sorry. I've actually been eager to meet you, buuut our friend up there has kept us preoccupied," she explained apologetically.

Ymir rolled her eyes. "I already told shorty over there, I don't know anything about the lizard."

"Is that right?" Hange mused, looking to Levi. "Didn't she turn into a Titan right after that gorgeous bastard saved another cadet?"

"Gorgeous?" Ymir asked before blinking as she looked to Levi while pointing to Hange. "Is she talking about-?"

"The scaly bastard, yeah," Levi confirmed, glancing to the mad science woman. "And yeah, she did."

"Maybe she's an accomplice in all this?" Hange suggested with a rather dangerous smile. "Perhaps she'll be more talkative."

"Wait, wait," Ymir spoke up with a sigh of resignation. "You're both assholes, you know that, Shrimp, Freak?"

"More than you know," Levi agreed. "Now, what do you want to say?"

"I don't know, okay?" Ymir answered with a sigh. "I've never seen that thing before in my life."

"Perhaps," Hange said with interest. "But you have to know a great deal about Titans. You know, seeing as you are one."

Ymir didn't answer, just stared at the scout with narrowed eyes.

"Then what's so important about this other cadet?" Levi asked pointedly. "Don't tell me you went berserk over a crush?"

Ymir clenched her fists before she could stop herself.

"Oh, so it is that," Levi observed.

"She has nothing to do with any of this, okay? She didn't know about me, about… what I am," Ymir swore tiredly.

"And what are you, really?" Hange inquired, narrowing her eyes at the shifter. "Titan? Human?"

Ymir took a deep breath at that. "You probably don't want to know," she warned with a frown. "But I won't tell you anything more. Not until I've had a chance to see Krista."

"Do you think you're in a position to bargain?" Levi countered with a raised eyebrow.

"Yes," Ymir countered with a small smirk. "We both have something the other wants. You want answers, I want to see Krista," Ymir pointed out before something crossed her face. "Unless she's…"

"She's alive," Hange confirmed quickly. "Though, if you're telling the truth about her, what makes you think she'll even want to see you now?"

Ymir's smirk became hollow. "If not, she can tell me so to my face at least."

Levi stared at her for a moment. "Give us something useful and we'll consider it."

Ymir remained silent and resolved, as if challenging them to call her bluff.

Hange sighed deeply. "Look, this is kind of your last chance to cooperate, to give us some reason to believe you're not our enemy. Otherwise, I imagine this conversation will get a lot less civil."

Ymir smirked, and it wasn't completely fake. She had survived a few rounds of torture before getting shipped off to Paradise, then the decades of being a Titan. And she could regenerate. She could take whatever they could throw at her. "Bite me."

Hange shrugged in disappointment. "Okay, come on over," Hange said, waving to someone else in the hall, outside of Ymir's view.

Ymir felt all the bark and courage drain from her face as she saw who came into sight. It was a soldier, handcuffed with a bag over their head, while being lead roughly by another soldier with white hair. But they were short. Really short.

'No. Nonononononononoono,' Ymir's mind was in a loop as she prayed she was wrong, that this was a trick.

Rico kept a firm grip on her captive and pulled the bag off, revealing Ymir's fear.

"Ymir?"

"Krista!" Ymir yelled, pulling forth and lurching against her chains.

"My, what a reaction," Hange teased with a chuckle, patting Krista on the shoulder, the Cadet wincing at the touch. "We've been having some interesting, but rather uninformative talks with Ms. Lenz here."

Ymir gritted her teeth as she stared at Krista. She looked tired, exhausted, but her face was painted with this look that nearly broke Ymir's heart. It was confusion and hurt, boarding on betrayal.

"Ymir, I… I don't understand what's going on. Is it true? Did you… You turned into a Titan?" Krista asked softly.

Ymir shut her eyes as hard as she could before the fight drained out of her. "Yeah. Yeah, that's true. That was my big secret," Ymir said with a hollow smile. "I'm sorry. I didn't want you to find out this way."

"Then why did you do it?!" Krista cried out, Hange leaning away in surprise at the outburst. "You had to know that you couldn't take on that monster by yourself! So, what was it? Were… were you expecting help, from someone?"

Ymir blinked, her hands trembling as she realized what Krista, Krista of all people was asking her, accusing her of.

"Ymir, are you helping the Armor and Colossal titans? Are you… are you trying to kill us all?" Krista asked, her tone desperate to believe it wasn't true.

"Krista, I… do you really… that's not…" Ymir stopped, the words trapped in her throat.

"Please, I want to understand! I want to believe you're not our enemy," Krista all but begged, eyes glistening with tears.

That you're not my enemy. They both knew that was what Krista meant.

Ymir couldn't take it. She could live with Krista thinking anything else, except that she wanted to harm her, kill her. "No, Krista. I'm… I'm not with them. I never was, I swear," Ymir answered solemnly.

"Then who are you with, exactly?" Hange interrupted with a raised eyebrow.

Ymir tsked and looked away.

"Oi, brat, get your act together," Levi called out in annoyance. "The higher ups aren't convinced that your friend here knows nothing. So if we don't get answers from you…"

Ymir inhaled sharply. It wasn't too hard to imagine them torturing Krista, uselessly because the small blond really knew nothing about this. They already had her in chains. "Fucking damn you all," Ymir hissed with a trembling voice.

"Ymir, please. Everyone is just scared and confused," Krista all but begged. "If you just tell them what you know-"

"It doesn't matter! You're all fucked!" Ymir exclaimed in frustration, Krista taking a step back in shock. "There is no future beyond these walls! Even with that scaly bastard up there, that won't be enough! You're all doomed, don't you get it!?"

"We've been doomed for a hundred years," Hange remarked casually. "That hasn't stopped us from trying anyway."

"If we're doomed, why are you here?" Krista asked with a frown. "Ymir, why did you-"

"I thought you were dead, okay?" Ymir said with an empty tone. "I saw red. Wanted to make the overgrown lizard pay for eating you. Didn't really register or care that you would have died if it hadn't done anything."

"So you were just trying to avenge your… friend," Hange said knowingly.

Ymir glared a bit at the meaning but didn't refute it.

"You're lucky nobody else got hurt or killed trying to fight you," Levi remarked. "We're not promising shit. Because we can't. But we can at least try and keep you from getting turned into a corpse and taken apart."

Ymir sat there for a long, long moment. The question was becoming more and more akin to asking how she wanted to die.

"Well, you don't need to decide just yet," Hange said suddenly, nodding to Rico and Krista. The small woman nodded, pulling the cadet away roughly.

"Hey. Hey! Where are you taking her?!" Ymir yelled suddenly, sweat forming on her brow.

"We're not taking her anywhere," Levi said, puling up a key as he approached the cell next to Ymir's.

"We're just going to get Ms. Lenz here situated in her own cell," Hange explained amicably.

Ymir's eyes dilated as she heard the chains being attached to Krista, and her situation began to sink in. Transforming in this small area

was risky but not impossible since her Titan was so small. But if she did, she'd probably kill Krista as well. And if they did decide to torture Krista for information… they'd do it right there, right next to her. So she could hear every. fucking. thing.

Meanwhile, Krista sat uneasily on the bed while Hange secured the chains… to nothing at all.

"There you go, all set," Hange said, placing a hand on Krista's shoulder and giving her an encouraging nod.

Krista nodded and sighed as they moved away, locking her in the cell. After all, they had to make this convincing.

Flashback

Krista wasn't too nervous, not at the beginning. When she had attempted to report for duty, she had been escorted to a small room with a table and been told to wait here.

That sounded scary to most people, but under the circumstances, it made sense. With the situation as it was, they had to make use of the rooms they could work with in the area. She just assumed they wanted an in-depth report on her… encounter with the creature that saved her.

She shivered, though not exactly in fear. The memories had started to resurface after she initially woke up. It was so strange and uncomfortable, being in the mouth of another creature, let alone the tongue wrapping around her like a snake. Not to mention the strange jolt that ran through her body. Though, she wasn't sure what made her black out. Maybe the jolt was some kind of paralytic or non-lethal venom? Or had she just not been able to breath properly in that thing's mouth?

Regardless, she knew Ymir and the others would never let her live this down. She could hear the jokes about how she tasted already.

Speaking of Ymir, she was surprised she hadn't seen her instead of Armin when she awoke. She wondered how much effort it took to force her away from her bedside. She would have asked if "Trips" hadn't started waking up.

Discomfort aside, she'd have to thank that… creature at some point, if she was even allowed close to it. What would happen to it now, Krista didn't have the slightest idea about, and decided not to inquire about it.

After the first couple hours, she felt a bit guilty, knowing her friends were out doing the grunt work of cleaning up the bodies of the fallen while she sat peacefully in this room. But the hours stretched on, and she grew concerned. What was taking them so long? Had an emergency happened? Did they remember she was here?

… Was this a set up? Had the people who killed her mother decided it was time to finish her off?

No, no she'd already be dead by now, or somewhere further away at least.

She bolted upright in her chair as the door opened, and a man walked in. "I'm sorry to keep you waiting. We've been very busy."

"I understand," Krista said as the man took a seat, looking him over. "Wait, aren't you…?"

"Commander Erwin Smith of the Survey Corp, yes," Erwin confirmed as he took a seat. "We have much to speak about, Cadet."

She nodded, trying to hide her unease. Was this normal? She guessed the golden creature was important, but was her tale about being in its mouth really that crucial? "About the beast, Sir?"

"In part," Erwin said idly. "I take it that no one has attempted to inform you of the incident that happened just after your near-death."

It was almost eerie how casually the Commander brought up her near fatal fall, but she suppose that was just part of being in the military. "I don't believe so, Sir. Why, what happened?"

Erwin's stare was intense, as if he was studying every inch of her face in an instant. She swallowed, wondering if he would even answer. When he did, it only made her more confused.

"We're calling it a Titan-Shifter."

End of Chapter

And there we go. This is mainly a continuation of last chapter, people starting reacting to the "Trips is Eren" thing. Armin is as observant as ever, Mikasa is Mikasa, and Hange continues to disturb everyone with her continous compliments to Eren's new form. And the Warriors are trying not to shit bricks.

And now we get to Ymir's side of things, and I clarrified why she's reluctant to talk to anyone. Obviously, due to the way she was revealed, she's geting worse treatment than even Eren. Canon-Eren saved Trost, Hate-Ymir tried to kill the thing that saved Trost. Hence, Krista gets dragged into this to apply preassure.

We've entered the funny part of the fic where the rest of the cast has to try and guess what Erendorah is trying to say. Did not realize how funny this would be until I was writting it.

PS To everyone still asking, yes, Eren will eventually get the wings, gravity beams, and everything else.

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 9

God of Hate

PLEASE READ: In regards to my pat-reon, I've started it so that future chapters of certain stories can be veiwed 1-2 months in advance before they arrive here, starting with this one.

Or more bluntly, chapters 10-11 are already up on my pat-reon. No, this isn't a paywall, this just means that this story, and eventually a few others, will now get regular monthly updates.

"So, you claim you have no prior knowledge of this creature or the existence of Titan-Shifters?"

Krista sighed, more from sheer exhaustion than actual annoyance. Or so she told herself as she sat at a table in a small, dark room with only an oil lamp for light. "I'm sorry, but I'm still… trying to process that one," she said slowly as she rubbed her forehead and looked across the table at the Scout Commander, Erwin Smith. "You're saying that there was a soldier that turned into a Titan? How is that even possible?"

"That is what we are attempting to discover," Erwin acknowledged neutrally, not giving away if he believed her ignorance or not.

"But why ask me? And why won't you let me see anyone?" Krista asked in confusion.

"Because the Titan Shifter revealed themselves immediately after you were saved by the Beast," Erwin continued, leaning forward intently. "You would appear to be of great importance to one or both of them. So it is a little hard to believe you know nothing of either."

Krista paused for a moment as she realized something. "I'm being detained."

"Until we're satisfied with our inquiry, yes," Erwin confirmed with a nod.

"But I don't know anything," Krista insisted helplessly. "I mean, the… Beast was trying to save others too, so I'm not that surprised. But a Titan-Shifter? Why would I know anything about that?"

"Because the Shifter wasn't just a soldier, but a cadet of the 104th," Erwin elaborated.

Krista's eyes widened at that. "One of us? One of us was a Titan this whole time?" she said in disbelief.

Erwin said nothing, letting the silence speak for itself.

"Who?" she questioned, the question leaving almost involuntarily.

"Are you sure you don't know the answer to that yourself?" Erwin returned evenly.

Krista's mind raced. Who? Who could it be? She wanted to say none of them, but if it had to be one of them…

She had been eaten. Or that's what it had to look like, right? And when she was falling, there was one person racing forward to try and save her…

"Ymir."

Erwin narrowed his eyes at the answer, no matter how soft it was given. "Yes, it is Ymir. How did you know that?"

"Wait. Just… wait," Krista said slowly as she ran her hands through her hair, her mind spinning as her heart pounded in her small body. "Ymir? Is… is she alive? Is she hurt?"

"She is alive, but being contained elsewhere," Erwin explained stoically.

"What are you… what are you going to do with her?" Krista asked cautiously, eyes turning alarmed before sharpening in fear. "Did she hurt anyone?" she asked, knowing that if she did, Ymir might have no hope at all of being seen as anything but an enemy.

"No human, no. But she attempted to kill the beast after it saved Trost,' Erwin answered pointedly.

The blond girl suddenly stood up, hands slammed on the table. "But she only did that because she thought I was eaten! That had to be it!" Krista insisted.

"So, you're saying that this Ymir would value your life at the expense of humanity?" Erwin inquired.

Krista froze at that. "I… I don't know. I don't know what she was thinking," Krista said, sliding back into her chair. "You… didn't answer my question."

"Even if we ignored her attempt at destroying the first hope for humanity against the Titans in a hundred years, there is a more pressing matter," Erwin admitted sternly. "Ymir's very existence implies that she might not be the only shifter, nor the only one to have infiltrated the walls."

"You think that she… helped the Colossal and Armor Titans? That she's working with the ones that broke through Wall Maria?" Krista asked slowly. She knew Ymir could be callous and not gave a damn about most other people, but she couldn't… couldn't reconcile the Ymir she knew assisting in something like that.

But that was the question. Did she really know Ymir at all?

"She hasn't given us any reason to believe otherwise," Erwin answered. "In fact, she's refused to cooperate with us at all."

"That idiot," Krista said, taking a deep breath. "If… if she doesn't, then she'll… you'll…"

"The Military Police will likely have her killed so that her remains can be studied," Erwin admitted without hesitation.

Krista stilled, and Erwin watched rather intently as she raised her head. That was a very different look in her eyes and a shift in her very posture. "I have no idea what's going on, Commander," she restated firmly. "But I want to know."

"What are you suggesting?" Erwin inquired.

"Let me see her. Let me see if I can get her to talk," Krista requested firmly. "I know you might not believe me, but I want answers too."

Erwin remained visually unphased by her request, but he did appear to be considering it. "And why should I believe that you yourself are not just an ally of hers, possibly another Shifter as well?"

"I don't know how to prove I'm human," Krista admitted before frowning. "But I have something I can give you. I doubt you've had time to check, but there are no records of me existing before entering the military."

Erwin raised a brow, showing his interest.

"I'm the bastard daughter of a noble. I was set up with a fake name and made to join the army so that I would disappear," Krista explained bluntly. "Ymir… Ymir knew that. She said she overheard it."

"And you think that was why she attempted to get close to you?" Erwin questioned.

"I didn't think so at the time, but now…" Krista said doubtfully. "I thought I knew Ymir better than anyone. I still want to believe that."

"And if you do?" Erwin asked pointedly. "If, by chance, your only importance to her is your bond with her, what do you believe?"

Krista smiled. Erwin couldn't help noticing it seemed more genuine than the other ones he had seen from her. "That Ymir is not an enemy of humanity."

Erwin watched her, as if searching for any doubt in her eyes before nodding slowly. "For now, I'll believe you. You will have your meeting with the Shifter. If you agree to some terms."

"You want to use me to trick Ymir into talking, don't you?" Krista predicted, almost expecting it.

"Is that an issue?" Erwin countered.

"No," Krista said with a sigh. "Because knowing Ymir, she's either being too stupid or stubborn to help herself right now."

End Flashback

"Krista?"

She blinked away her memory, tilting her head as she heard the voice from the other side of the wall. "Yes?" she asked with a scrunched brow.

"Krista… I told you my secret," Ymir reminded softly. "Mind sharing yours?"

Krista smiled; almost grinned really. "Historia. My real name is Historia."

Ymir gave a breath at that. "Historia."

Krista tried not to smile too wide and blush too hard at how her true name sounded on Ymir's tongue. "I'm not using it yet."

"Huh? Why not?" Ymir asked, sounding a bit disappointed.

"I thought I'd wait until after this mess of yours clears up some before doing something like changing my name," Krista said with a snort.

"That's fair," Ymir conceded, her chains jingling as she shrugged. "So… you believe me, right?"

Yes, yes Krista did. "I want to," she said instead. "But-"

"I… I know how it looks," Ymir admitted, swallowing thickly. "Anytime an intelligent Titan shows up, it destroys something that helps humanity against the titans. The walls, the cannons, and I took a bite out of the thing that saved Trost. So… I get it. I look suspicious at best, and this is not my best," she said with a half-hearted chuckle.

"And you won't say anything," Krista continued gently. "Ymir, I understand everything except that. I mean, I get why you didn't come forward before. But you're already caught."

Ymir didn't respond this time, clenching the sheets in her fists.

"… They were still clearing out the bodies in Trost," Krista mused.

Ymir clicked her tongue, "Are you trying to guilt-trip me?"

"What? No?" Krista answered with a frown. "No, I'm just… wondering about the others. So many people died, and our friends are spending their days collecting the corpses."

A small silence came over them as Ymir frowned in thought. "Mikasa turn to tears yet?" she asked, blunt yet without bite.

"I don't know. Armin looked like he was holding up, so I guess she is too," Krista answered with a sad smile. "It's hard to believe, Eren died just before he could see the Titans finally pushed back."

Ymir opened her mouth before closing it with a furrowed brow. "Yeah, hard to believe."

Krista raised an eyebrow at the tone. "Ymir? Can you answer me one thing? Please?"

"I'll try," Ymir promised, and it hurt Krista to hear her say it with such a pained tone.

"Why did you come here if you're not our enemy or ally?" Krista inquired.

Her question was met with emptiness.

"Ymir?" Krista prompted.

"I'm thinking," Ymir answered distantly. "I guess it's just as I said: I wanted to live my life for myself. Out there, I couldn't really do that. I did in these walls, for a while."

"As a thief in the interior?" Krista asked as a jab, one she didn't realize she made.

"Oh, Historia has some bite to her," Ymir teased with a chuckle. "But yeah. I didn't mind being a street urchin. It wasn't that different from-"

Krista frowned as Ymir abruptly stopped her explanation. "From what?"

"Nothing," Ymir said neutrally but forcefully.

Krista rolled her eyes. "You're not very good at lying, Ymir."

"Eh, lying is for pricks and surprises," Ymir countered good-naturedly.

"Well, you know what I think?" Krista asked with a smirk.

"No?" Ymir asked, curious by the tone.

"I don't think you were trying to avenge me or anything sweet like that," Krista said impishly. "I think you were jealous."

"Jealous? What are you on about now?" Ymir asked in confusion.

"That Trips knows what I taste like now."

Dead silence rang in the cells, permeating the very air.

"That scaly motherfucker!"

Meanwhile

Eren's boredom grew and waned as Hange wrote down notes. He understood the importance of studying him, hence why he was standing next to a building, giving something for Hange to use as a reference to estimate his size and, occasionally, moving to give her a better look.

"So, he's about twenty meters tall, twenty-five if you stretch the necks up. Speaking of which, those beauties are eight-and-a-half, while the heads are about two meters tall. The body is a lot less slender than I'd expect, at six meters, but that's probably to compensate for the three heads," Hange murmured to herself, looking up with a grin at her subject. She still couldn't help marveling at him as she stood on the ground, staring up at the golden beast. "I'm coming in for a closer look, okay?!"

Eren nodded with all three heads. Drei yawned, getting a look from Eins and Zwei. The left head looked apologetic until Eins yawned as well, glaring at his opposite head for starting this. Zwei just rolled his eyes while keeping his attention on the human approaching them.

"I need to figure out how that works one day," Hange mused as she approached, studying the legs and tails. "Okay, these twins of yours must be thirteen whole meters from the base. Hmm, two tails but three heads? Maybe he'll grow another tail?" Hange pondered before looking at the legs. "You seem to always stand like this, so I'll just say the legs are in the four-and-a-half range."

Eren pondered that point about his tails and heads. Why three heads? Why two tails? But then again, that might be asking why humans didn't have three or four eyes or only one set of arms. He

missed arms though. Not even just human arms, he just missed having front limbs. It felt so weird not to have them, and his side heads ended up picking up his instincts to use his hands sometimes.

"Your claws all vary a bit, but I'd say around three-fifths of a meter is the longest," Hange continued on, glancing to his scales. "Oi, I'd love to take a scale off, but we should probably be careful about that."

Eren appreciated that. He was pretty sure that he'd cripple Hange if he accidentally flung her off his foot.

Hange hummed while looking up, tapping her chin with her pencil. "Like a Titan, no genitals. But it might just be internal, seeing as you appear to be a reptile. I'll have to look into that more."

She couldn't see it, but Eren's three heads had deadpanned. If they had the biological ability to blush, their faces would have turned orange from embarrassment. He was actually glad he didn't have a penis in this form, or a visible one at least. Because then Hange would be sketching it, commenting on the size and girth, and he'd just want to smash all of his heads into the building and ignore everything.

"Huh. I wonder…?"

While Hange continued her observations, Erwin was having a rather unusual meeting with Commander Pixis.

"My, you certainly do pop up a lot lately, Cadet Arlert," Pixis noted with a smile as the group of four met on the walls, soldiers from both corps nearby.

"Sir," Armin greeted, himself and Mikasa saluting the commanders.

"At ease," Erwin said simply. "The Section Commander has already told me of last night, but I would like you to confirm it once more."

Armin nodded stiffly. "The three-headed creature is Eren Yeager of the 104th, believed to be KIA until last night."

"Hm, so our big friend isn't just a soldier, but a young cadet fresh out of training," Pixis noted with interest, looking greatly amused. "I'd share a drink with him, but I fear we'd run out of the good stuff before he was even buzzed."

Erwin didn't acknowledge the joke, while their audience looked on awkwardly. Armin was obviously worried about this meeting's intent, while Mikasa had an impatient air about her. "For now, only a handful of people were made aware of this discovery, besides those from last night. Until we understand more, it would be best to keep such information a secret to only those that need to know."

"Sir, wouldn't people be less wary of him if they know he's human?" Mikasa questioned with a frown.

Pixis hummed to himself. "You'd have a point, if not for the Titan-Shifter," he commented casually.

Erwin nodded in agreement. "Word of the Titan-Shifter has already spread beyond our ability to contain. If the people learned that this creature was originally a human as well, they wouldn't have reason to believe there is any difference between him and a Titan-Shifter."

"Right," Armin said thoughtfully. "We can see the differences between him and a Titan, but anyone just hearing or reading about him would just be imagining another giant monster… one on our side, but still."

"Exactly," Erwin said. "At the moment, we just don't know enough to convince the public of anything. The tales are now more or less of how a giant creature that hunts Titans helped save Trost and defeated a Titan that could masquerade as a human; concerning, but an overall hopeful tone."

Mikasa nodded in understanding. "May I ask why we are here, Commanders?"

Erwin and Pixis shared a look before turning back to the cadets. "We are currently forming an informal group to… keep an eye on this creature," Erwin continued on. "It was mainly to give the illusion that we have some control over the situation. However…"

"To be frank, we don't know how much this has messed with the boy you used to know," Pixis simplified. "And being around familiar faces that know who he is might make the situation a bit better for him."

Armin blinked as he understood the meaning. They were trying to placate Eren. While his friend seemed to be himself, they had no way of knowing if this… transformation hadn't affected his mind. Even if it hadn't, Eren was effectively confined to Trost with no way out and very little to do.

It was almost funny. For right now, keeping Eren content was actually a military priority. Armin knew Eren wouldn't do anything to endanger those around him, not intentionally, but he decided not to voice these assurances and appear too biased. If it gave Mikasa and him an excuse to have access to Eren, he'd let the military worry for now.

"Our primary goal is to understand this situation as best as possible," Erwin continued. "As the ones closest to him, do you believe you can interpret him to some degree?"

"I believe so/Absolutely," Armin and Mikasa both answered, Armin turning a bit sheepish at Mikasa's lack of hesitation.

Both commanders noticed the differing answers but didn't comment on them.

"Due to keeping his identity a secret for now, we must ask that you address him by an alias when around others that are not in the know," Erwin explained.

"… Some of our friends have taken to calling him Trips," Armin explained awkwardly, very sure that Eren wasn't too fond of that nickname. "Will that suffice?"

"That will do," Erwin answered, utterly unphased by the nickname. "Now-"

They were cut off by roaring coming from within Trost. Three roars in sync to be specific.

"Eren?!" Mikasa said in alarm, racing to the edge, to look down for the giant spot of gold, others doing so as well.

The sight quickly became less alarming and more confusing. It was a bit hard to make out from the distance, but Eren clearly wasn't being attacked. Instead, his heads were roaring and growling down at something, or someone.

"Well, I wonder what's got him all up in a fuss?" Pixis mused idly.

"I believe I know," Erwin answered, turning to the cadets. "Come with me. This is as good a time as any."

"Sir!" They answered, all three of them descending off the wall. Pixis remained, deciding to make sure no one on the cannons got trigger happy.

By the time they had reached the area, Eren was no longer roaring but was still growling. They landed to see that all three of Eren's heads were united in glaring down at a sheepishly grinning Hange, who waved at their arrival.

"Commander Erwin, fancy seeing you here," Hange said in false innocence.

"Hange, why is he growling at you?" Erwin asked pointedly.

"Well, about that- and can you stop that for a second while I explain, please?! I'm sorry, okay?!" Hange called over her shoulder at Eren.

The giant creature complied, still glaring at Hange with… with…

'Wait,' Armin thought in confusion as he tried to read Eren's expression. It was hard, but it wasn't a raging kind of anger *. 'Is Eren… embarrassed?'*

"Thank you," Hange said before turning back to her leader, who watched her patiently yet expectantly. "Anyway, I have good news! I have confirmed that he is almost definitely NOT a Titan."

Erwin became interested, especially with Eren's reaction. All three heads stopped glaring to look at one another other with questioning looks before turning back to Hange expectantly. "And just how did you come to that conclusion?" Erwin asked intently

"Simple: He has an asshole."

Dead silence rang over them for a moment.

"Excuse me?" Mikasa asked pointedly, Erwin raising an eyebrow as if to prompt Hange further.

"Look, I know how that sounds! But a Titan doesn't have an anus! They just have butt cheeks! They don't digest what they eat, so they don't need one!" Hange reminded, before gesturing to Eren with a confident grin. "But he does! And if he does, that means that he has a digestive system! That his body doesn't function like a Titan's, but something else entirely!"

Armin's eyes went wide as he understood Hange's point. Eren's shape could be overlooked as just a very… VERY odd-looking abnormal titan. But the more fundamental difference between him and the Titans made it easier to prove that Eren was in fact NOT a Titan at all.

Still, that did leave one question…

"And how, exactly, did you discover this, Hange?" Erwin asked.

Hange grew silent, feeling the accusing stares of giant green eyes stabbing into her backside.

Erwin looked up at Eren. "I apologize for her," he said sincerely. "I'll be sure to have her supervised better in the future."

Eren let out three separate sighs; One of annoyance, another of understanding, and the last of gratitude.

"Come on, Erwin, you know this isn't the craziest thing I've done even this week!" Hange defended.

"That is my concern, Hange," Erwin stated bluntly.

Eren's left head nodded with wide eyes, as it was now his concern as well.

"On that note, where is Moblit?" Erwin questioned with a frown.

"Oh, taking care of Sonny and Bean or sleeping. He was up all night helping me again, so I'm not sure anymore," Hange explained with a casual shrug.

"I see," Erwin acknowledged, before turning to the Cadets. "I should assume you both accept helping watch over… Trips?"

If Eren was surprised by the nickname's use, he only looked annoyed.

Both of them nodded their confirmation.

"Very well. Hange, perhaps you should go check on the Titans," Erwin suggested.

"Eh? But I'm still not done with my-" Hange started, only to see that the Commander was glancing in the direction of the cadets. "Oh. Right. That's a good idea."

"Thank you, Sir," Armin said in understanding, the two Scouts leaving the trio to some privacy.

There was an awkward moment when Mikasa and Armin just stared up at their giant, scaly friend.

"Good morning, Eren," Mikasa said suddenly, smiling as if everything was normal.

Armin decided that perhaps that was best. "Morning," he waved back.

Eren's right head gave a nod with a grunting roar, returning the greeting as best he could.

"Did you sleep well?" Mikasa asked, feeling some relief wash over her as the right and the middle head rolled their eyes at her concern.

The left one, however, tilted his head back and forth, perhaps as a shrug or a so-so gesture. For Armin, it was easy enough to understand: It wasn't as bad as you might think.

"That's good? So…" Armin gave half-heartedly, glancing in the direction of the clogged breach. "You actually thought you could fill the hole with ripped-up buildings?"

Eren gave him a flat look.

"Yeah, I guess you didn't have a lot of options," Armin said, glancing to Eren's armless torso.

Eren nodded meaningfully, repeatedly: Yes, it is weird not having arms.

"Should we be worried about getting him something to eat?" Mikasa asked with a frown. "He hasn't eaten anything since before the battle."

Armin blinked at that very good point. Humanity did NOT have enough cattle to feed something this big.

Eren gave out a call to grab their attention, all three heads shaking meaningfully before gesturing to his stomach and shaking again.

"Is he saying he's not hungry?" Mikasa guessed, getting a rapid nod.

Armin frowned, cupping his chin. "But if he has a digestive tract, shouldn't he have to eat something?" Armin murmured.

The blond boy blinked as he felt hot air on his body. Looking up, he saw Eren was now closer to him, and the left head was right in front of him, with a rather… blank look on his face. "Eren?" he asked, just a bit intimidated because, Eren or not, it was a giant head suddenly right in front of him.

"Armin," Mikasa said, nodding to the side and drawing his attention to Eren's tail, which moved about before it started to rattle for a moment.

Armin stared for a moment, and then turned sheepish as he looked back towards Eren, noting the right head was giving him a grin, while the middle just watched on. "Yeah, pissing you off probably wasn't the sanest plan either, but it worked, right?" Armin reminded with a weak chuckle. The other two heads nodded, but the left one gave him a disapproving look still. "Besides, I trusted you," Armin assured with a smile, getting skeptical glances all around. "Well, yeah, even before I knew it was you. You were letting Titans eat you while you pushed the boulder! It was pretty obvious you wanted to help at that point."

All three heads gained amused looks, chortling out roars that must have been laughter. Mikasa smiled, enjoying the peaceful moment they were having.

Which ended as Eren suddenly went silent. They looked up in concern, Eren standing back at his normal height again, but all three

heads gained expressions that appeared to be of deep thought and consideration before abruptly turning around.

"Eren?" Mikasa said in surprise. He looked back at them, nodding for them to follow him. She shared a look with Armin before they followed him, taking to the roofs to run along them. Eren wasn't going at a very fast pace, but it still required effort for those of human size to keep up with him. "What's gotten into him?"

"I don't know. Maybe he just wanted to walk?" Armin mused, looking to Eren's heads. No, he was looking too keenly around to just be taking a stroll. "What's he searching for?"

They used their gear to get over a crashed-in gap in the roof, almost on instinct, but Mikasa's brow furrowed as she glanced around. "Armin. This path? Isn't it…?" Mikasa pointed out

"Yeah, you're right. This is the path Eren took to move the boulder," Armin confirmed, eyeing the spot where he had yelled at Eren to get him angry enough to stun the titans.

Eren suddenly stopped. It was impossible not to notice, the sudden silence and stillness bringing them to a halt as well. The three-headed dragon was now peering up and down the road before him. Mikasa and Armin moved to the edge, looking down for whatever might be there.

It quickly became obvious what was different about this area. There were plenty of normal signs of battle: damages to the buildings and roads from Titan attacks, the smears of blood from the fallen, and the occasional discarded piece of their blades. But there were also large smears of a black substance on the ground.

"This is where the Titans were biting him, before we could arrive," Mikasa realized with a tinge of regret. But neither male noticed this, their attention on something else.

"He definitely isn't a titan."

Mikasa looked to Armin in confusion, who was staring down with stunned eyes, his brain working a million miles a minute.

"Titans vanish, even their blood. His didn't," Armin stated. "He wanted to show us this?"

"No," Mikasa said suddenly, watching as Eren leaned down to examine the area. "He's still looking for something."

Armin furrowed his brow as he recalled what he said himself before Eren started acting like this. "Is he looking for his… flesh?"

It was a strange thing to say, even if they knew Eren was fine. Or as fine as he could be in this form.

"The garrison probably already rounded it up," Mikasa mused. "But that would still be proof, right?"

"Yeah. Yeah, definitely. There's no mistaking flesh that large for a hum-" Armin stopped as Eren gave a call, coaxing them to use their ODM gear to descend down to the street, careful to avoid Eren's necks. His heads were all looking at a smear of his own black blood, the middle head glancing to them as they approached.

Mikasa's eyes caught something in the dark blood, something shining. "Is this…?" she said, moving forward to pick it up. It was bigger than her hand, and it was smeared in the blackness. But Mikasa turned it over to reveal a clean spot, shining like gold.

"One of his scales," Armin realized. "The others must have missed it with all the blood. We've… barely ever planned for what to do with a territory reclaimed by Titans, let along with something as big as them that doesn't just… vanish."

Zwei gave a hum-like growl from behind them, causing Armin to look to Mikasa curiously, who shook her head. She couldn't guess what Eren was thinking right now either. Armin found that the middle head was the hardest to read. They were eventually going to have to talk

with Eren, try to get whatever answers they could get from him in this form.

"What do you think the Garrison did with these… pieces?" Mikasa asked idly.

Eins made a strange hissing noise. "They probably burned most of it," Armin answered, the same head nodding to indicate that was his idea too.

Meanwhile

"What do you mean you burned them!?"

Hannes flinched under the glare of the rather crazed-looking female Scout. "Look Ma'am, I was just following directions. And the higher-ups already set aside some for studying," he explained, attempting to be diplomatic.

"Do you idiots have any idea how important those pieces of flesh are!? They might be our only way of understanding our beautiful new ally!" Hange declared, looking like she might bite him.

Hannes decided to ignore the 'beautiful' part in that sentence and hoped that was just his tiredness playing tricks on him. "Well, it's a good thing it's all still here, right?" he pointed out.

Hange started to say something before closing her mouth, gaining a curious look. "What do you mean? You didn't start burning yet?"

"Oh no, we started all right," Hannes answered, waving her over to a table, where three rather large slabs of strange meat sat, with yellow scales still on them. "We had those things on a pyre all night, but they didn't burn one bit."

Hange just started at the flesh, her entire demeanor changing.

"Ma'am?" Hannes prompted, causing her to step towards the chunks of flesh intently.

"The remains don't dissolve, the flesh regenerates in a completely different form, and it doesn't burn," Hange mused. "Two of those things are proof it's not of the same kind of creature as the Titans, but this…?" Hange stopped short and started smelling the air. "Do you smell that?"

"Huh?" Hannes said, taking a few whiffs of his own. "I don't smell anything."

"Exactly," Hange stated with wide eyes. "This flesh has been dead for nearly two days now. It should reek."

Hannes frowned. He hadn't thought about it, having had his mouth and nose covered when handling the main stash of this, but she had a point. "What should we do then? Bury it?"

"We might have to in the end. For right now, I have some research to do," Hange said, turning to the soldier. "Don't let anyone touch this. I'll be back soon."

"Ma'am," Hannes called after, causing her to pause. "That thing in there? It's on our side, right?"

"Hmm?" Hange asked, looking over her shoulder at him curiously.

"You just seemed rather… spooked, I guess," Hannes stated warily.

Hange slowly gained a rather disturbing grin on her face. "Oh, it's not that. I'm actually about to burst in excitement, and it's taking every ounce of will to control myself. But don't you worry, that gorgeous lug is definitely with us."

With that, she left.

"Huh. So I didn't imagine her saying that," Hannes said, rubbing the back of his head. "Where the hell are those brats in this mess anyway…?"

End of Chapter

Well, there you go. Gope you all enjoy this. Especially with how Hange confirmed that Eren isn't a titan, lol. But other than that, we got Hannes showing up and the deepending mystery for everyone as Eren proves to more and more "not a titan" by his very nature. Meanwhile, Krista is fishing for whatever info she can get out of Ymir.

That's about it for this chapter. Not a lot happened, but things are being set in place. Anyway, until next time! Hope you all are safe!

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 10

God of Hate

"Anything?"

Levi stood at the entrance to the underground cells, looking over at the approaching form of Erwin Smith. "Well, she got her talking. Mostly mushy shit, but the kid's not bad. The Titan-brat hasn't revealed anything important though."

"We weren't expecting results right away," Erwin acknowledged in acceptance.

"So, what was that screeching about earlier? Did Hange poke the thing in the ass?" Levi asked neutrally.

Erwin remained utterly silent.

Lev's eyes widened minutely. "Please tell me you're joking."

"Hange is accustomed to Titans, which don't seem capable of being embarrassed," Erwin reminded, a small quirk of the lips betraying his amusement.

"Right," Levi said, deciding not to address that statement. He also decided to make sure Hange took a bath within twenty-four hours, even if he had to throw her in a river. "That aside, how is our Golden Friend?"

Erwin hummed. Levi had already been brought up to speed on the fact that "Trips" was in fact a cadet, just as the shifter had been, but seemed unable to change back. "Well enough, I suppose. We can do very little to accommodate him besides surrounding him with familiar faces," Erwin explained. "Hange plans on making some attempts to form whatever dialogue we can with the creature, for answers and mutual understanding."

Levi knew that would be hard with the scaly brat unable to speak, but he figured Hange would have an idea or two eventually. "Any word from the higher-ups?"

Erwin frowned. "The creature can't be moved, obviously, and transporting the shifter would be a risk with her intentions so uncertain."

Levi raised an eyebrow as he understood. "They're coming here."

Erwin nodded in confirmation. "There will be several officials coming to see the situation for themselves. It is, for all intents and purposes, a trial. More for the shifter than for Trips, but still," he explained grimly. "They'll arrive in three days."

"So, we have three days to decide if the mouthy brat is a lost cause, and to make Gold seem as human-friendly as possible," Levi summarized cynically.

"That would be the long and short of it," Erwin agreed. "You'll be present, obviously, as a safe-"

"Captain Levi, Commander Erwin."

Both turned to see Hange approaching them with a rather strained smile on her face. Erwin felt a sense of caution grow within him. Hange never called Levi by rank unless it was an introduction. For her to use it, something must be wrong. "Hange, something to report?" he asked, Levi watching intently.

"No, no, everything is fine. Peachy. Great. I just need a word with you in private about the soldiers mishandling my Titan-babies," Hange answered, keeping her false smile up.

Now Erwin was growing very concerned, but outwardly just nodded as he led Hange away. Levi frowned as they left. For Hange to be acting like that, she must think that whatever she had to say could not have any chance of being overheard.

Hange remained eerily quiet as Erwin led her away to a more secluded spot, entering a currently-vacant home for good measure. "Okay, Hange. What is bothering you?"

"I just discovered something that might be… dangerous," Hange started delicately. "I was studying the remains from, what did the cadets call him? Oh, right, Trips."

"I'm aware that the tissue didn't vanish like a Titan's, Hange. And I already assumed it was resistant to flames," Erwin stated, having a hunch she would bring this up eventually.

"You did?" Hange asked in surprise.

"I saw the remains being stored away in an alley. They would have burned through half of it by then if they could," Erwin answered.

"I- Okay, point, but that's not it," Hange continued, pulling something out of her jacket. "I pulled this off to study it."

Erwin looked at it, a large gilded scale that could only come from one entity. "One of his scales. What of it?"

"Well, I got to wondering, why does his scale look like it's made of gold?" Hange continued in false whimsy. "And the answer is: It doesn't."

Erwin raised an eyebrow, silently inquiring an explanation.

"Erwin, it doesn't *look* like gold, it *is* gold," Hange explained in a forceful whisper.

Erwin's eyes narrowed as his mind kicked in. Eren didn't regenerate like a titan, but he did regenerate all the same. And if he could transform like the shifter, that was a potential near-endless supply of gold. People might not only try to take bits of flesh Eren had lost in battle, but try to rip them off Eren himself at their own risk. And the nobles, in their greed, might try to force Eren into being a… gold

factory for them to harvest. That was even ignoring the effect it would have on the economy.

But there was one problem Erwin had with this on a logical level.

"Gold isn't that strong of a metal," Erwin reminded with a frown. "How can those scales resist so much punishment?"

"It's not just gold, obviously," Hange answered with a frown as she looked back down at the scale. "There is… something else in there as well. Another element or maybe the scales below the golden layer are harder than the coating. I don't know anything for sure yet. I just thought you should know before someone else figures this out."

Erwin nodded. "Thank you, Hange. Anything else to report?"

"Nothing so secretive," Hange said in relief. "I've been trying to understand why the flesh doesn't decay. It took me a while to find one, but I found a piece of flesh that was smaller than all the rest. Unlike the other chunk, it was starting to decompose."

"Really? Why would that be?" Erwin inquired.

"It's hard to say anything for sure," Hange admitted. "I think the size had something to do with it, but… I asked and found out it was part of the batch they did ***not*** try to burn."

Erwin furrowed his great brows at what Hange was implying. "You think the fire might have actually… rejuvenated the flesh some?"

"I'm not thinking anything yet. It could be a coincidence; a random fact that ultimately had no effect on this at all. It's just so exciting, discovering a whole new kind of creature in a similar classification as the Titans," Hange said, grinning madly before frowning in thought. "Commander, you know people better than I do most of the time. Do you think this will be enough to convince everyone that he isn't a Titan?"

Erwin paused in consideration before nodding. "At this point, yes. If presented correctly. He saved Trost too, and every soldier from that battle speaks of Trips like a savior or an ally. The atmosphere is in his favor," Erwin acknowledged. "But there is still the most important question."

Hange nodded…

Later

"How did this happen?"

Eren cocked his heads at the figures standing on the roof; Erwin, Hange, Levi, Mikasa, and Armin.

"How did you become like this?" Erwin clarified. "I'm aware that you can't speak. But if you could, could you answer?"

Eren just shook his head now, answering "no" to the question.

"No, you don't know, or just don't want to say?" Levi asked pointedly.

Eins snorted while Drei frowned. Scowled? Zwei quirked his head thoughtfully before one tail rose up.

"Oh, oh, he means the first one!" Hange realized, pointing overly excitedly.

The heads nodded while Eren's friends watched on. Armin knew they needed to ask this for clarification, but he couldn't help noticing it was just the five of them with Eren. None of the other cadets were present. He wondered why.

"Do you recall turning into this form at all?" Erwin continued on.

Eren gained three looks of deep thought, his tails refusing to rise.

"He doesn't know?" Mikasa asked, more to herself than the others.

"Probably had a lot of other things to worry about," Levi remarked, glancing to the boulder that sealed the breach of Trost.

Eren turned away from them to Hange's alarm. "Hey, where are you-" she stopped as Erwin held out an arm to stop her.

Eren didn't walk away from them so much as just… wandered to the side. How had he become this? He remembered Thomas dying, everyone dying. His eyes wandered down to his right leg, remembering his human one being bitten off.

"He's trying to remember," Armin said softly, getting curious looks from all but Erwin. Eren's eyes trailed to Armin for a moment and the boy winced.

Eren remembered saving Armin from the bearded titan. He remembered… he remembered…

"Is he growling?" Levi asked with a frown.

"No," Mikasa answered, watching the trembling in Eren's long necks. "He's groaning."

He remembered being eaten. Being in the belly of a Titan, among dozens of other victims. He remembered some delirious solder crying for her mother or father as she died.

Shock. Fear. Despair. Rage. Hate. Hate. ***HATE*** !

"Wow!" Hange exclaimed, nearly falling backward as Eren slammed his head into a building.

"Eren!" Mikasa called out in alarm.

"Keep your voice down! Call him Trips or something if you got to yell!" Levi scolded in annoyance.

"But what's wrong with him?" Mikasa asked, torn between glaring at the soldier and rushing towards Eren.

"He's remembering being eaten alive," Erwin stated simply. "I imagine we would all rather not remember surviving such an ordeal."

Levi suppressed a shudder as he silently agreed.

Eren simmered, gritting his teeth as his face remained buried in the wood and debris. He remembered being devoured, but how did he get out? How did he turn to this? His mind swam between the gap, the time between being about to die and slaughtering Titans with this form.

All he could find was… a jolt; A spark of some sensation that ran through him. It was familiar now that he remembered it, but where had he felt it before?

He pulled himself free of the building, shaking the bits of wood off before returning to his audience. With a short pause, he shook his heads with a regretful look on his face.

"So, he doesn't know either," Levi summarized.

The left head let out a low crooning sound.

"He's apologizing, I think. For doing…" Armin paused, looking over the hole Eren had put in the roof. "That."

"It's fine. I can only imagine how stressful and confusing this has been for you," Erwin accepted, still staring Eren in the eye… or at least, the middle one, mostly.

It was strange for Eren. Mikasa and Armin knew him, human or not. Hange treated him like a great discovery, while Levi was eyeing his every movement. But when Erwin spoke, it was like the commander was really speaking to another human rather than just pretending Eren wasn't some giant beast. And Eren appreciated it on some level; Eins, Zwei, and Drei.

"I understand that you have the ability to stun Titans with your roar," Erwin stated after a moment. "Were you aware of that before Cadet Arlert, shall we say, motivated you?"

Eren nodded in confirmation.

"Then, is there a reason why you did not use it more liberally?" Erwin asked pointedly.

Eren's middle head nodded while his right gave out a large yawn. "Oi, Brat, take this seriously," Levi said in warning, getting a glare from the same head, who deliberately yawned again. "Is he trying to be cheeky?"

"Umm, Sir? I think that's his answer," Armin stated, getting everyone's attention. "I think… whatever he does to stun the Titans takes more energy out of him."

"Ahh," Levi said in understanding, knowing the right head was still eyeing him.

The middle head nodded before gesturing to the left head, who rolled his head back and forth.

"And I'm going to assume that means you didn't know exactly how to use that ability at the time," Erwin guessed. This time the heads looked relieved at his understanding as one of the tails deliberately pointed in Erwin's direction. "Do you think you could do so again?"

Eren nodded firmly now, showing the confidence that he had.

"We could use the Titans for him to test on," Levi pointed out.

"Don't offer up my new babies so freely!" Hange protested with a glare to her comrade, everyone dutifully ignoring her outburst as best they could.

"I'm not sure if your friends have informed you," Erwin stated, nodding to Armin and Mikasa. "But they and the others that know

your identity already will be part of the main group of those organized to keep tabs on you."

Eren didn't look offended in the slightest, and they took that as a good thing. Ally or not, they couldn't leave him completely alone.

"We'll be calling you Trips for the time being," Hange informed with a smile.

Now Eren looked firmly annoyed with the return of the nickname Connie and Sasha had given him.

Erwin became slightly amused by the reaction. "Please bear with it for now. We need to make clear to everyone that you are not just a rogue Titan with an odd form," he requested.

The giant creature gave its accepting affirmation to the request.

"I don't think we'll get much more progress right now," Erwin stated idly. "For now, try to get comfortable while things settle. Hopefully, we can find a way to make communication… easier."

Eren hoped so, he genuinely did.

Meanwhile

Levi didn't dwell much on the meeting with the Golden-Brat. He'd let Hange and Erwin figure out how to handle that situation, the Titan-Brat was his main priority right now.

He returned to the entrance, finding Eld and Oluo standing outside. "Captain," Eld greeted.

"Anything to report?" he asked neutrally.

"If there is, Petra and Gunther would be the ones to ask. That's a good sign, I suppose," Oluo stated idly.

Levi hummed, heading down the stairs before stopping at the bottom. He could see Gunther seated in the chair across from the cells, Petra leaning against the wall. She must have caught sight of him as she started walking towards him. He raised an eyebrow at her, inquiring if anything had happened.

Petra just giggled, quietly. "They're cute together."

Levi rolled his eyes before walking past her.

"Sir," Gunther greeted.

"Ahh, great, shrimpy is back," Ymir said sardonically.

"Hey! I'm shorter than he is!" Krista protested from the other cell.

"He's scrawny, you are fun-sized," Ymir countered with a smirk.

"Well, we're about to deprive you of your fun for now," Levi said, taking the keys from Gunther, heading to Krista's cell.

"Hey. Hey! The hell are you doing to her?" Ymir demanded, trying to sound more angry than scared.

"I'm going to give her a black eye, maybe knock some teeth out," Levi answered dryly.

Krista swallowed nervously. She was… mostly sure the captain wasn't serious, but he was very intimidating.

Ymir growled in her throat. "You cockbiter, I'll-!"

"Relax," Levi said bluntly. "We're just taking her to take a bath. Unlike you, she doesn't have to wallow in her own stench, just yours."

Ymir simmered as she heard Levi "removing" the chains from Krista before leading her out in cuffs. "I'll take over for you both when she's done."

Ymir listened as their footsteps vanished, a dark and creeping horror filling her gut. "Hey. You, with the carrot top," Ymir called, catching Petra by surprise. "Be straight with me. Your captain won't… do anything with Krista, right?"

It took a moment for the meaning to register, Gunther going still in shock while Petra briefly gained an angry look before… smiling. It was not a nice smile. "Ymir, was it?" Petra asked with a sickly sweet voice. "What exactly are you accusing my captain of, right now?"

"I'm asking if he keeps it in his damn pa-" Ymir stopped as Petra suddenly drew her blades, gaining a faux-bored expression.

"You know, Hange is very curious to find out if you can heal even in human form, and how much," Petra mused. "Should we start with the tongue, Ymir?"

The Shifter girl wisely didn't answer but felt relieved a bit. If the Scout was that offended, Krista was probably safe in one way at least.

Meanwhile, Krista stretched her back and now unshackled arms as she walked freely. "Pretending to be restrained is almost worse than being restrained," Krista mused, mostly to herself.

Levi ignored her comment. "So, did you learn anything new or just spend the entire time whispering sweet-shit to one another?"

"I think I did both, Sir," Krista answered honestly. "She still doesn't want to talk though."

"What else is new?" Levi retorted evenly.

"She knows about other Shifters," Krista stated bluntly.

Levi paused, considering that. "What did she say?"

"I pointed out that Trips and her can definitely take on the Armor Titan so that just meant worrying about the Colossal Titan. She laughed. She didn't mean to, she tried to cover it up, but I heard it,"

Krista answered with a frown. "It's that laugh people give someone when they think they've seen the worst of it. I've heard her laugh like that a few times."

Levi nodded. "So, Shifters or not, she knows about other threats to us. Have you got a sense of why she doesn't want to speak?"

"She's scared of something. Something about helping us," Krista continued. "I kept prodding her a bit on it, but…"

"I get it. Anything else?" Levi pressed on. "Because we only have a few days for her to make up her mind."

Krista almost asked what would happen in a few days, but decided she didn't want to know. She'd just have to make sure Ymir talked. "Nothing you'd want to hear, Sir. Where are you taking me anyway?"

"To take a bath. I was serious, you don't get to stink up the place any more than it has to be," Levi stated bluntly.

"Oooookay?" Krista accepted awkwardly. "… Sir, may I ask an unprofessional question?"

"Might as well," Levi accepted in resignation.

"What's a good comeback from a short person to a tall person?" Krista asked curiously.

Levi stopped, looking back at her with a considering look. Maybe he'd enjoy this, just a little. "I assume you don't mean cutting them off at the knees."

Time seemed to pass in a blur for everyone. Krista continued to play the part of hostage while trying to coax Ymir to willingly cooperate with the Scouts, while Eren attempted to stave off his boredom with the help of his friends. One group was having more progress than the other.

"Really, asshole?" Jean asked with a glare, looking from the horse saddle on the ground to the giant reptile that he swore was smirking at him with three heads. "Really?"

"Hey, you told him to prove it was him again, just to make sure it wasn't a dream," Connie reminded with a snicker.

"I didn't expect him to throw a damn saddle at me!" Jean countered, getting a disturbing croaking sound from Eren that he knew was a laugh. "Shut it! And was putting a damn horse saddle in your MOUTH really worth the joke?!"

Eren nodded without hesitation, thrice over, getting several laughs from all around.

"Haha, he's got you there, Jean!" Reiner said with a laugh, Annie standing silently by him.

"Well, you seem to have adjusted to this pretty well, Jean," Marco complimented.

"Hard to take him seriously when I know it's that blockhead," Jean said, getting a mock-snarl from Eins. "I don't need a translation for that."

"Okay," Armin interrupted, looking over the group. "For the sake of appearances, we're all meeting like this as an… introduction to Trips. And we all have to call him that for now."

"Even Mikasa?" Annie asked skeptically.

"Don't you mean especially?" Sasha countered knowingly.

"Yes," Armin said with a sigh. "Anyway, the plan is to rotate watching him in groups of two every three hours."

"So Connie and Sasha, you and Mikasa, Reiner and me, Jean and Marco," Annie summarized.

"Er, well, the groups aren't set in stone or anything," Armin said, scratching his head sheepishly. "So, any questions?"

Sasha raised her hand instantly.

"… Yes, Sasha?" Armin answered, feeling both wary and awkward.

"Question: Can we ride him?" Sasha asked hopefully.

Eins flared his nostrils, glaring at the food-loving girl.

"I'd take that as a *No*," Marco decided with a weak smile.

"More like a *Hell No* if you ask me," Connie murmured, disappointed but somewhat expected that reaction.

"But why not!? Mikasa gets to!" Sasha pointed out, jabbing her finger in the direction of the Ackerman.

Who was currently sitting on the back of Drei's neck, near the base, and looking particularly content with her own arrangements.

Now Drei glared, leaning in very, very close to snort a gust of hot air into Sasha while the others leaned away.

"In summary, because the jackass says so," Jean said, looking up at where Mikasa sat, looking far more comfortable than she had any right to be on that scaly exterior. "Lucky jackass," Jean muttered enviously.

"Question. What are we supposed to do, besides watch him?" Annie asked with a raised eyebrow. "Or is this just for appearances?"

"Kind of?" Armin answered with a shrug. "But it helps to have us around and make sure the other soldiers don't accidentally get hurt around him or do anything… well, stupid."

"And what about when he does something stupid?" Connie asked. "Cause, no offense man, but you've had stupid moments that make

Sasha look like Armin. Haha-OW!"

Drei grunted in response to that.

Mikasa smiled as she called down from her spot. "He says thank you, Sasha."

Annie silently watched on as the group chatted, with Eren's own strange input. Eren still slept at night in this form, so if she and Reiner were given a night shift, that could give them a window where they might be able to sneak about with little suspicion; They had already lied and claimed that they hadn't told Bertolt yet, as it was undecided if he would be brought into this group. The question was figuring out where Ymir was being held.

They hadn't planned on this being a dragged-out affair, just taking down Wall Rose like they did Maria, hence why they hadn't done much of any recon on Trost. But Annie was reasonably sure Ymir was hidden in the area on the other side of the wall. Trost was growing more and more vacant as the body collecting went underway. But there was too much foot traffic on the other side, wandering into any place they weren't meant to be could be seen as suspicious if they were noticed.

Annie wondered what they were looking for if they were looking at all. If Ymir hadn't said anything yet, what would the military look for as potential enemy agents? For right now, she was sure that anyone in their age group was suspicious. Given that Ymir and Eren were both from the 104th, she imagined that those that knew who the scaled beast really was now were scrutinizing all of them.

Her eyes narrowed, wondering a distinct possibility. Were they placing them around Eren as a blanket countermeasure? If they suspected any of them being a Titan, then they placed many of them near a Titan-Killer. And if they somehow figured out who was a Shifter, then they'd just have to tell Eren and…

Eren's middle head snapped his jaw loudly at Mikasa, who refused to get down from sitting on his neck.

A very precarious situation they were all in and it all came down to if their comrades realized they weren't really their allies, and if they did, would they be able to pretend they didn't know long enough to set up a trap. One wrong move on their own part would give them away, too hasty a move from their enemies would alert them to their cover being blown.

She absently stared at the golden figure Eren had become. Of all people, why did it have to be him? Out of everyone they knew in the walls, even just in the 104th, Eren was probably the worst person to have this kind of power. He not only had the will and desire to use it against his enemies but… he knew them. Not just in the sense of friends, they had fought with him, trained alongside him and even taught him.

How easy would it be for Eren to recognize their fighting styles during a fight against their Titans? However long his disbelief lasted, she imagined. Then would come the rage, and the real fight.

Still, on the upside, this would also give her and Reiner chances to observe Eren for potential weaknesses, and possibly learn new details from the Scouts.

End of Chapter

Well, here's the next chapter. And yes, Ghidorah's scales actually have gold in them according to the Monsterverse. A bit of a slow chapter, but its kind of suppose to be. No one is making much progress with Ymir or Eren, so its slow in-universe too.

Still, yeah, in canon, the trial happened int he capital, but that was because they moved ERen there while he was in a coma after Trost. They can't move Eren and Ymir is awake with no clear alligence to the people of the Walls, and they know next to nothing on Shifter limitation. Thus, any trial that happens, has to happen in Trost itself. I

mean, yeah, they could have the trial without Ymir or Eren present, but that's not as fun and has its own problems.

Also, Mikasa is riding a dragon. Which is just awesome to imagine. That dragon is also Eren, which just probably fulfills a few of Mikasa's dreams, lol. Sorry, had to. See you next time!

Early viewing of chapters 11-12 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 11

God of Hate

AN Big News! This story now has its own TV Trope Page! That's my fourth fic to get a page there!

Eren found time flowing in a pleasant blur now that he had his friends to stave off the boredom. Be it the Scouts studying him, the inane yet hilarious moments with Connie and Sasha, Marco meditating arguments where Jean pretended to understand Eren's insults, the enjoyable silence from Annie and Reiner, or the peaceful normalcy of being around Armin and Mikasa. He had something to distract him, to look forward to.

Speaking of normalcy…

"Good morning, Trips!" a random soldier greeted from a few rooftops over as Eren made a stroll through Trost.

Eins grunted while Zwei nodded and Drei chirped back a warm reply. The soldiers had grown increasingly accustom to his presence. They were almost at ease when he passed them by in the streets, but not completely. Not that he blamed them, his tails still nipped buildings sometimes.

He looked up to the walls, noting that it would be some time before the sun rose high enough to shine into the city.

"What do you think he's looking at?" Marco asked idly, watching Eren stroll about, the three heads appearing to be scrutinizing the most random of things before moving on.

"Anything to pass the time," Jean mused, munching on a piece of bread he had brought along from breakfast. It was a bit stale, but not that bad. "All he can do now really is walk around and have us guess

what he's trying to say. Blockhead or not, anyone would be bored in his state."

Marco silently agreed with that assessment, even if he felt like Eren was actively looking for something specific instead of just trying to kill time. A frown reached his face as he looked upward. "Hey, Jean? Have you thought about what you're going to do once this is all settled?"

"Hmm?" Jean questioned wordlessly.

"I mean, are you still planning on joining the military police?" Marco asked curiously.

"What do you mean? Of course I am. Why wouldn't I?" Jean retorted, letting that hang in the air before groaning heavily. "Is what I'd like to say."

Marco looked to him in surprise, silently waiting for more of an answer.

"I earned that spot among the top, and I survived Trost. I should just head off to the interior and never look back," Jean muttered, rubbing his forehead. "But I'm not sure that's even an option anymore."

"What do you mean?" Marco asked with a furrowed brow.

"I'd like to just blame it on… our golden friend here. After all, they might draft us all into some group formed to help deal with him regularly," Jean started before clicking his tongue in self-annoyance. "But honestly, after everything that happened, I don't know if I can just run off to the interior anymore."

"Run off?" Marco asked with a frown.

"Don't kid yourself, Marco, that's what I was always trying to do before. You're going because you really want to believe in it. That's a better reason than me," Jean stated with a frown. "I don't know what

I'll do, not until I've seen how this plays out- and where did the blockhead go?" Jean asked, eyes wide as he realized Eren had… disappeared. Something as big as a titan shouldn't just vanish! Well, not without being dead, but that wasn't the point!

"Jean?" Marco said cautiously, his smile a bit awkward now.

Jean deadpanned at the expression, feeling a very soft current on the back of his neck; a very soft, very warm current. "He's right behind me, isn't he?" Jean predicted, getting a slow nod. With a deep breath, he turned and managed to barely keep from jumping out of his skin when he saw the three heads peering at him. "Dammit! Why the hell are you so sneaky!?" Jean swore in annoyance.

"I think you just adjusted to the ground shaking a little bit," Marco supplied idly, watching the giant curiously.

Jean was about to snap at Marco before he realized the way Eren was looking at him. The middle one was on edge, eyes twitching off to the side, while Eren's right one appeared to be in a mood more sour than annoyed, and the left one was looking over to the side constantly. "What's wrong? What is it?" Jean asked with a frown.

Eren gave a quick squall before jerking his heads to the side, leading them on.

"What's gotten into him?" Marco asked in concern.

"I don't think it's him we need to worry about," Jean said with an uneasy feeling in his gut, jumping off the roof to follow after Eren with his gear.

It wasn't a long trip, just a block over. Jean realized that whatever Eren saw, he must have spotted it from his previous spot. But Jean knew they had arrived when Eren stopped at a corner and stared at something down a street while waiting on Jean.

As he got closer, he heard something: Crying. Someone was crying. "Oh jeez, what now?" Jean said under his breath as he landed on a roof on the opposite side of the street and got a good view.

His blood ran cold at the sight.

Sasha. Sasha was crying, a sobbing wreck as she sat and hugged her knees to her chest. And next to her was Connie… Connie wasn't moving. He was laying limp on the roof.

"Connie!" Jean yelled as he shot over to the building.

"J-jean?" Sasha whispered as she looked up, seeing him land beside them.

"Sasha? What happened?!" Jean demanded instantly, kneeling down to check Connie's pulse. It was there. In fact, it was fine. "Connie, can you hear me?! Can you-?!"

Connie immediately lurched up and started vomiting on Jean's leg.

Jean froze, his expression completely blank as Connie finished hurling. Of course it was a stupid prank. Why did he think it could be anything else? Any moment, the three of them would start laughing their asses off. Or five of them, since Eren had three heads to laugh with now.

"Jean?" Connie asked weakly, wiping his mouth off. "W-what are you doing here?"

"Ruining my uniform, apparently," Jean remarked dryly. "Real funny guys. Come on, laugh it up already."

No one laughed. The uneasy feeling returned, and he wished they had laughed.

"Jean," Sasha spoke, her voice steadier but still sad. He looked at her and saw a sorrowful expression that looked so foreign on her face. "Over there," she said, pointing over to an open window

perched out of the building, likely to an attic of some sort. "There's, um… there's a kid in there."

Jean winced. They had all dealt with bodies the past few days. And yes, child corpses were objectively the worst to handle emotionally, but it definitely wasn't Sasha's first one anymore. Had she just seen too many bodies or…

"The… the kid's mother is in there too," Sasha continued with a whisper. "Jean, she… she killed her. She killed her daughter, and herself."

Jean flinched, gritting his teeth; Going out by suicide instead of being eaten, even putting down a child as a mercy. In the face of the inevitability of the Titans, Jean couldn't blame someone for taking that route, he really couldn't. That didn't make it any easier for the living to stomach, the hellish situation where doing something so terrible made an uncomfortable amount of sense.

With a deep breath, he walked over to Sasha, wrapping one arm around her and placing his head against hers. "Just give me your mask. Me and Marco will deal with them. You take Connie to a medic or something," he instructed softly. He didn't know anything better to say, all he knew was that he had to be strong for his friends.

Sasha nodded mutely as she turned to look at Connie, prompting Jean to do so as well. Marco was there, helping Connie to his feet. Jean shared a look with his friend: Marco had heard everything; he knew what was going on.

"S-sorry," Connie said, rubbing his head. "I was a dumbass. I opened the window without my mask on. I got a full blast of the rot in the face."

"Idiot. You're lucky if you don't catch some disease from that," Jean muttered, trying to sound more berating than concerned.

Connie didn't have a comeback for that. He heard everything too, sending Sasha an apologetic look for passing out on her while she dealt with… that.

Jean's gaze shifted to the side, seeing Eren watching on solemnly. There was no deviation in the three heads, the same look on each on them. Jean understood now. Eren called them over because, in this state, Eren couldn't do or say anything to help them. But he knew Marco and himself could.

Jean knew life for Eren was often dull right now, but he could only imagine the kind of hell these moments were for him. The times when, due to his own size and lack of speech, could do nothing for a friend in need.

It was one of the few times Jean would admit, even just to himself, that he genuinely felt sorry for Eren.

Meanwhile

"So, while I can't say anything until witnessing it myself, all accounts of witnesses that saw Trips' regeneration make it sound less like a Titan-regeneration and more accelerated healing," Hange rambled on as she paced the room. "While it is slower than a Titan's would be, this is outweighed by his overall durability. It's also possible that the healing would be faster in a less exhausted state, as most testimonies are in regards to the wound to the middle neck sustained from the Shifter. Further-"

"Section Commander?" Armin spoke up, as politely as possible. "While this is all very fascinating, I think we've gone a little off-topic."

Mikasa nodded silently. Hange had rattled from one theory or observation to the next, some almost completely unrelated beyond involving Eren himself.

The woman fell silent, blinking. "Ah," she said in realization. "Right. Sorry about that. I got a little carried away. No, there was a reason I

called you here. It's about one of my theories, just not one I mentioned yet. And it's… mostly about Eren himself."

"You mean how he became this?" Mikasa asked in interest.

"Oh no, we are still completely in the blind on that one," Hange explained, sounding way too cheerful to be giving that answer. "No, this is more to do with personalities. Tell me, you've noticed how his heads all act… different from one another?"

"You mean how Eren argues with himself, Ma'am?" Mikasa asked bluntly. Armin winced but nodded despite the questionable wording.

"Well, yes," Hange agreed with a shrug, somewhat happy for the bluntness. "You see, it's been bugging me. He is one person with three heads. Most of the time, the heads all appear to be in sync, in agreement, but other times it's like each is its own person. The only explanation that makes sense is, well, hard to explain without making Eren sound… crazy," she stated cautiously.

The fact that Hange was the one using the word "crazy" made it all the more clear how strange this whole situation was.

"I think I know where you're going with this, Ma'am," Armin cut in cautiously. "You think Eren's personality is somehow… divided among the three heads."

"It would explain the internal conflict. The one on his left appears to be the one most concerned for humans and almost affectionate to some, as you've confirmed it was the one to return your scarf, Mikasa," Hange stated with a nod to the red garment. "And the right one is, well…"

"The angry one," Mikasa supplied knowingly. "Eren had a lot of that at times."

"Yes, well, that makes sense as all three heads have shown aggressive personalities at times," Hange agreed with a shrug. "The

middle one is up for debate, but it seems to be the intelligence, the one guiding the other two."

Armin didn't react to that but did admit that he was curious. Eren was a passionate person that often thought with his emotions first, be they negative or positive. He couldn't help wondering just what that version of Eren was like, his intelligence thinking while unclouded by rage or other intense emotions. He wasn't sure he liked the idea to be honest, and was therefore glad that Eren's other aspects were in the other two heads at least.

Eren's current mental state was strange to think about really, many being as one.

"Thankfully, again, the heads are often synced as just "Eren" but I am mildly concerned but intensely curious if Eren retakes human form, and the effect it will have on his mind," Hange mused.

Mikasa frowned at the use of "if" from Hange but didn't speak up.

"Why are you bringing this up, Ma'am? If you don't mind me asking?" Armin asked curiously.

"You two are the ones closest to him," Hange explained. "And we have no idea when he might change back, if he can. It might be in an hour, it might be in a year. But when it happens, we don't know the mental state he's going to be in."

"You want us to spy on Eren to see if he's going insane after he changes back," Mikasa stated coldly.

"I want you to help us make sure he is okay," Hange corrected simply. "I'm sure that's what we all want here."

"So I suppose you were just checking his temperature through the other end then?" Mikasa retorted coldly.

"Can't you let that go? I've already been banned from being around the beautiful bastard without someone else present," Hange protested with a pout.

Mikasa did not look amused.

Armin glanced between the two women awkwardly. Mikasa had taken a certain dislike to Hange since meeting her, and it was somewhat obvious why, if not a bit… ridiculous. "Ma'am, all this talk about the future…" Armin said meaningfully. "Does that mean the higher-ups have decided Eren is still an ally of humanity?"

"Hmm, not officially, but it's a formality at this point," Hange explained idly. "Pragmatically speaking, Eren is too valuable to attempt to eliminate. And we're not sure how to attempt such a thing at this time. Realistically, it's more of a risk to even try."

Mikasa scowled in confusion. "What do you mean?"

Hange sighed. "If Eren went berserk, he could unblock the breach or even destroy the gate into Wall Rose, letting the Titans through. I don't think he would, but we're not about to start poking him in the eye and hope he doesn't bite."

It was a very disturbing image. And Armin had to admit, he had imagined that possibility before he knew it was Eren inside that creature's mind. Mikasa, however…

"… You're saying this, but I've heard you talking about ripping his scales off," Mikasa pointed out neutrally.

"That is for scientific purposes! And I have his consent anyway!" Hange insisted before coughing into her hand. "You know, as long as I warn him this time."

Mikasa's fingers drummed on the blade carrier of her ODM gear. Armin wanted to calm her but was morbidly curious if Hange knew how half the stuff she said sounded like.

"Anyway, yes, your friend is safe with all the testimony to his… benevolence, shall we say," Hange continued on with a wave of her hand. "The only things to iron out is whose jurisdiction he falls under, what to do in terms of… housing him, and other such details."

Mikasa noticeably relaxed and showed Hange the first look of appreciation since they had met days ago. Armin too had a small smile at that assurance. "Would it be too much to ask to be kept in the loop on that, Ma'am?" Armin asked hopefully.

Hange smiled with a chuckle. "Oh, don't worry. I'm sure everyone will agree that you two at a minimum need to be kept around him."

Later

"Okay, because Connie was a dumbass, we need to switch up the groups for today so Sasha isn't by herself," Jean stated to an impromptu meeting between their little group.

"She could just skip her shift, and we can split the difference between the next two, right?" Reiner suggested thoughtfully.

"… Sasha doesn't want to be by herself," Jean repeated awkwardly, getting some looks of understanding. "So, who goes with whom?"

"I'll keep an eye on Sasha," Mikasa stated after a moment, looking to Annie and Reiner. "Do either of you want to cover with Armin?"

Annie tried not to tense. It was a small group; there weren't a lot of others to ask. There wasn't any reason to think they suspected them yet.

"It's fine. I don't mind being alone with him for the ni-" Armin stopped midsentence. "I just realize what that would have sounded like."

"I bet you did," Reiner said with a chuckle. "Annie, you up? I could use some time to catch up with Bert."

Annie looked to Reiner for a moment and resisted the urge to ball her fist. She wasn't talking to the Warrior that insisted they continue this mission; she was talking to the soldier that forgot whose side he was on. "Sure," she accepted idly. "Makes no difference to me."

Except it did; it made a big difference. She knew something was happening, and soon. Someone was coming. She didn't know who, but her snooping around made that clear. They were probably running out of time to do anything about Ymir before the islanders made up their minds of what to do with her. Kill her and the Jaw was lost, don't and she'd be all the harder to find if they took her from here. And that's if she wasn't cooperating. If she was, or if she started to, that was another kettle of fish.

But she was confident now that her cover wasn't blown after a couple nights of sneaking away from her shift while Eren slept. If there had ever been a time to try and capture them, it would have been at that moment, when all three of them were separated.

"Sorry for the inconvenience," Armin said with a sheepish smile.

"It's fine," Annie assured. And honestly, it would be. A shift with Armin wouldn't be horrible if said shift wasn't supposed to be her window to go snooping. Armin was far too observant to let her get away with any excuse that she could conjure up. And if Armin began to suspect her, she'd have to-

The loud hissing of a familiar giant reptile drew their attention elsewhere. "The hell is he up to now?" Jean muttered.

Without another word, the group made a small run down the street, finding Eren in an open area, staring down in frustration at a lot of debris from a house, scattered everywhere.

"Everything okay, Scales?!" Reiner called over.

Eren glanced to them, looking thoroughly annoyed and mentally tired.

Armin glanced around, almost expecting Hange to be nearby, but the madwoman was utterly absent from the scene.

Mikasa suddenly took off on her ODM gear, propelling her up to a roof behind Eren. "Armin, you might want to come look at this!" Mikasa called down with a scowl.

Armin and Jean shared a look behind ascending as well, Annie and Reiner following after. They reached the perch and found what Eren was so annoyed with. "Did he try to spell his name out of junk?" Jean murmured, seeing the wooden beams and such vaguely made the letters "E" and "R", but the beam that made up the back of the "R" was half-broken and bent. All around were more pieces of debris that Eren had tried and failed to manipulate with his heads.

"Not being able to talk must be getting to him," Annie observed.

"Armin and I can guess his meaning and intentions most of the time," Mikasa said with a concerned look, seeing Eren glaring down at his failed project with all three heads. "But that only goes so far."

With a snarl, Eren walked forward, stepping on and over the make-shift letters, hitting them with his tails.

"… You think it'd be too tedious just to have some soldiers hold a sign of each letter and let him point to them and spell it out?" Jean suggested in a grumble.

"We might have to try at this rate," Armin said with a headshake, turning to the others. "Annie, you mind if we take our shift now, so Mikasa and Sasha have the first night watch?"

Annie shrugged nonchalantly. "Might as well."

"Good luck," Jean said as the rest of them began to depart, Mikasa being the last to leave.

"… So, has Mikasa tried to take a nap on him yet?" Annie asked, curious but utterly serious in her question.

"Yeah, once," Armin answered with a small smile. "She kept sliding off the back though. She'll probably try the snout next."

Annie nodded, less disturbed by that than others might be. "I've only had night shifts so far. What's he like in the day?"

Armin shrugged. "Nothing that interesting. Sometimes he just walks around, others he tries to "talk" with us the best he can," he explained, grimacing as he look down at the broken attempts at letters. "And sometimes he tries something new."

Annie hummed, eyeing the behemoth as it began to walk back towards them. Eren nodded his middle head to Armin but all three of them did a double-take at Annie's presence. "We switched up for today," Annie answered bluntly, deciding to be, well, what was normal for herself lately.

The three heads became less surprised after that. Eins gave her a nod, possibly of respect? Zwei gave some kind of hiss she read as a greeting. Drei… the left-most head was glancing between her and Armin for some reason.

Annie looked to Armin, who just smiled while around his friend, form regardless, and didn't seem to notice the left head's odd behavior. Annie looked back and saw that said head was now… smiling, perhaps? It just looked like an unpleasant view of too many oversized teeth to her.

"How the hell do you read him?" Annie asked with a small frown.

"It's mostly guesswork, to be honest," Armin confirmed, blinking as Eren started making noises.

"Well, time to guess away," Annie stated as Eren gestured around them before the middle head nodded twice to Wall Rose. "What,

does he want to know when they'll let him out or something?"

Eren gave Annie an annoyed look, or three annoyed looks to be exact, while Armin turned thoughtful. "I think he wanted to know how the clean-up is going?" Armin tried, getting a nod from the middle head, both of the side heads giving Annie pointed looks that she ignored. "We're technically done now, I suppose? All the corpses have been collected, except for the few hidden ones. The injured are all patched up as best they can be, and there have been no other… incidents that I know of," Armin explained, Eren listening intently to him.

Annie, however, looked Eren up and down while he was distracted. His reach was far with those heads, but it'd be harder to attack anything that got up close and personal, especially at his backside. Not to mention he was top-heavy. Throwing him off his feet with his own weight shouldn't be too hard if she hit him right, or if Reiner did for that matter.

Stunning a Titan was relatively easy. All one had to do was destroy enough of the head and they'd be wide open for up to a minute. Eren's healing was slower, which would give them a bigger window, if not for one glaring issue: Eren had three heads. Ymir had tried biting one off but had only a chunk of the flesh. Perhaps the better idea was to go for the brains themselves, probably through the eyes if given the chance.

Reiner was concerned about this power awakening in another newborn Eldian, but honestly? Annie couldn't care less. That would be less dangerous than dealing with Eren having this power.

Meanwhile

"You want to give me a black eye?"

Krista sounded far less worried about this suggestion than she probably should be.

"Look kid, we're running out of time," Levi stated simply. "And you were the one that said you were fine emotionally fucking with her to get her cooperation."

Krista frowned with her arms crossed. "I'm not saying I'm scared of getting hurt. I'm just… not sure what to do after that," she explained with a sigh. "I've never done this before. Never *wanted* to do this before."

"I understand," Erwin assured pointedly. "But there will be a meeting to decide Ymir's fate, and soon. If she doesn't give us reason to believe she could be an ally and an asset, she'll be deemed a threat."

Krista sighed. "Fine, I'll give it a try. Just as long as the captain isn't the one to hit me," Krista stated.

"You'd prefer Petra?" Levi took a guess.

"No. Well, yes, but it's more than I'm almost certain you could… break my neck with a punch. If you wanted," Krista explained awkwardly. Neither Erwin nor Levi disputed that possibility. "Though, I know I probably need more than a black eye if I'm going to make it look convincing to Ymir…"

"Well, you at least act tough," Levi accepted idly.

"Very well, Petra will arrive shortly, and then-" Erwin stopped midsentence and Levi stood straighter.

"What? What is it?" Krista asked, suddenly on edge.

Levi made a shushing motion as both men narrowed their eyes. Then Krista felt it, a small tremor. "Is that, um, Trips?" she asked with a frown.

"No, it's too close to be him, and not strong enough," Levi countered, looking to Erwin who nodded. With that, the short Scout left the room

in a hurry.

Not even two minutes had passed before another soldier ran into the room. "Sir! There's been an incident! One of the Titans is getting loose!"

Krista inhaled but tried to contain her nervousness. There were hundreds of soldiers here including the Scouts. Two regular Titans didn't stand much of a chance here.

"Come with me," Erwin ordered as he departed the room with purpose.

Once outside, they were treated to the sounds of roars and small crashes. It was only a short distance, but by then they could hear the screaming.

"What are you doing to my Bean!?"

The fact that it was Hange screaming instantly made the situation less worrisome.

A crowd of soldiers had gathered, making way for Erwin as he approached, Krista keeping pace behind him. Once they got to the front, they saw the cause of alarm. One of the Titans, Bean apparently, had gotten his arm free somehow. The limb was severed on the ground, steaming as it rapidly dissolved to just bones. Several soldiers had a new, regrown arm held in a large cable as others began to hammer giant nails through the arm, keeping it pinned to the ground.

Seeing the threat was neutralized, he noted that there were no obvious signs of a fatality. All the blood appeared to be from the Titan, vanishing in the dark night's air. Levi was off to one side, casually holding Hange back with one hand as she glared at the ones handling Bean.

Levi caught his gaze and half dragged Hange towards their commander. "Report," Erwin instructed stoically.

"Nothing. No fatalities, no serious injuries," Levi stated bluntly. "The others already had it under control when I got here."

"Some of the nails must have come loose. I wasn't expecting them to act up, but the sun did just go down," Hange said with a sigh.

Erwin said nothing. Yes, it was possible that this was just an unfortunate accident. It could be nothing at all. But… his eyes narrowed as he scanned the area. "Levi," he spoke up strongly. "Who is guarding the shifter?"

Levi startled, looking to the Titan again and saw that indeed all four of his squad members were here. Petra was ready to slice Bean's neck if he got loose and Oluo was at the head of the group holding the cable while Gunther and Eld were helping hammer in the nails.

"… Shit," Levi cursed to himself before he took off running.

He reached the stairs faster than humanly possible and noticed instantly that there was no one guarding the entrance. He slowed his pace as he reached the passage down. It was quiet… too quiet. He grimaced as he descended the stairs several paces- before instantly leaping down the rest of the distance, his hands on his blades.

His scowl deepened. No one was in the hallway. No one was hiding in the nearest cells.

He continued walking, more on edge than usual as he crept from cell to cell, but found all of them empty. He stopped at the last one before stepping in front.

He was almost disappointed to find the Titan-Brat was still there, sleeping.

Or presumably sleeping.

"Hey, brat, you awake?" Levi asked loudly, ready to start kicking the bars again.

Ymir groaned as she sat up. "Well, I am now," she answered with a grumble. "Where's Krista, Shrimp?"

"Enjoying some time away from you," Levi said bluntly.

"Well, get her back here will ya?" Ymir said with a sigh.

"You do remember that you're the prisoner here, right?" Levi reminded bluntly

"Yeah, and guess what? You win," Ymir said with a fake smile.

Levi almost said something before stopping as he caught her meaning. "You're finally ready to start talking?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'll fess up now. When you get Krista back, since… you know, I'd rather only have to say stuff once," Ymir requested.

"… I don't buy it," Levi said with a frown. "You refused to say anything for days and suddenly now you want to talk? Why?"

"I had a long time to think, okay," Ymir spat back. "So get Krista, your scientist, the guy with the massive eyebrows, and anyone else you think needs to hear this."

Levi eyed her, studying her. He almost believed her. This brat was bad at lying. He was sure she was hiding something, but she wasn't lying. "Fine. I'll get your lovebird."

As he left, Levi decided he didn't like this, and he knew Erwin wouldn't either. Ymir just happened to give up after a Titan almost got loose and she was left unguarded. Something happened while they were all distracted. Something, or someone, had convinced Ymir to start talking.

But who?

End of Chapter

Mostly a slice-of-life-for-a-kaiju-shifter, but the excitement kicked in at the end. Ymir has apparently decided to cooperate with very suspicious timing, and Eren is getting frustrated with his inability to communicate with others.

Not much else to say. Sad moment for Sasha and the others, Annie trying to make the most of things since she can't go snooping, and Hange is preparing for the possibiltity that human-Eren might not be that… stable after having his mind fractured three ways.

Early viewing of chapters 12-13 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 12

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

It was tense as the group stood in front of Ymir's cell, watching the Shifter for any possible sign of deceit or treachery. Ymir, however, was smiling and appeared at ease. "Just for the record, I'll tell you everything, but not all at once."

"Ymir," Krista said uncertainly, finding this change in demeanor not only surprising but a bit unnerving.

"You're treading dangerously, brat," Levi warned idly.

"Look, I'm not stupid enough to tell you everything right off the bat just to get my head cut off," Ymir answered flatly.

"And just what do you intend to give us now?" Erwin asked pointedly.

"There are nine of us."

Eyes widened or narrowed at that statement. "Nine?" Hange asked quickly. "You mean Titan-Shifters?"

Ymir nodded idly. "Yeah. Three of them infiltrated the walls besides me. Or, at least, three that I know about," Ymir explained, scratching her head. "My… information isn't exactly up to date."

Hange scribbled some notes down while Levi stared at Ymir intently as if trying to discern what she was trying to hide.

"Nine in total? Or that you know of?" Erwin pressed on.

"Ugggh, a week ago, I would have said in total," Ymir answered in her own confusion. "The golden bastard raises more than a few

questions."

"So, he's an unknown discovery even among Titan Shifters," Hange said with a grin. "That just makes him all the more exciting."

Ymir eyed her oddly. "Right. But assuming that thing isn't a Titan Shifter? Then yeah, there should only be nine."

"But you said there were three here," Hange stated, the glint on her goggles hiding her eyes. "The Colossal, the Armor, and the…"

"Not sure which that one is, haven't seen them in action," Ymir answered with an honest shrug.

"But you know there are three?" Krista repeated in surprise. "Do you know who they are?"

"Look, I only saw them in human form once a long time ago, and that was a blur," Ymir answered vaguely.

"Just tell us what you can for now," Erwin interrupted intently.

Ymir took a deep breath. "Okay, you already know two of them: The Armor is what it sounds and looks like; Just a strong Titan with a lot of defense. The Colossal is a big asshole that explodes."

"Explodes?" Hange repeated in surprise. "What do you mean, explodes?"

"Hm? Has he not done that yet?" Ymir said in honest interest. "The Colossal has the power to cause a large explosion when it forms. I didn't actually think that was optional."

Erwin looked over to Levi, sharing a scowl. Their enemy already had another ace up their sleeve they didn't know about. "If there are nine of you, and three are also here, what about the other five?" Levi asked suspiciously.

Ymir rubbed her neck idly. "I couldn't say where they are, but I know two of them are missing. One of those was the Attack Titan, and it vanished a long time ago. So I don't know anything else about that one," she admitted with a shrug.

"And of the ones that aren't missing?" Hange pressed on.

"Well, there is the War Hammer. I don't know anything about that one because it's… secretive. Supposedly it's the second strongest," Ymir admitted, smirking confidently. "Don't worry, the rest I know something about. I'd say the most annoying will be the Cart Titan. It is not very sturdy and is on all fours for some reason, but I hear it can shift longer and more often than the rest of us."

"A quadrupedal Titan," Hange noted in thought. "We'd probably just write it off as an abnormal."

"So, there is a limit to your powers?" Erwin noted with interest.

"Yeah. If we use it too much, it starts to fail. We're just hurting ourselves at that point," Ymir answered with a shrug. "The norm, I guess, is a couple times a day at most. Anyway, there's also the Beast Titan. I can't tell you anything about that one, but for a good reason: It changes."

"Changes?" Levi asked with a scowl. "The hell does that mean?"

"Okay, look, short version of this for now: When one of the Nine dies, another gets the power, okay?" Ymir supplied, getting pointed looks but no interruption. "Anyway, the Beast Titan is always a hybrid of some random animal. Last I heard, it was some kind of pig or something, but who knows what it is now."

"Wait, wait," Hange said, holding her hands up. "You said animal. Could our golden friend be…?"

"I thought so at first, and just assumed he had gone rogue for whatever reason," Ymir admitted with a shrug. "But after I took a bite

of him, I don't see how. All the Nine heal the same as regular Titans and our blood isn't black like that. So if he's the Beast, I'm as confused as you all are."

"Besides the Beast, do all the Shifters stay the same for each… generation, shall we say?" Hange inquired, tapping her pencil to her chin.

"To my understanding? Yeah. They look different each time, but the Armor is always armored and mine is always short and toothy," Ymir explained, trying and failing to not sound bored.

"I think you mean mouthy," Krista muttered with a small smile, turning sheepish and apologetic as she realized she said that out loud.

The others decided to ignore that, watching the amused Ymir expectantly,

"Okay, okay, moving on. Let's see, who else. Colossal, Armor, Attack, Cart, Beast, War?" Ymir listed off to herself. "Oh, right, the Female Titan?"

Everyone looked somewhat surprised by that.

"Yeah, I know, it's weird. It's the only Titan that always looks like a woman, boobs and all. Nothing downstairs though, or I assume not," Ymir answered casually. "I'm pretty sure she's the third one in the walls. She's supposed to be a jack of all trades in a way. Doesn't specialize in anything, but has a bit of potential in everything."

"That makes sense, they'd need some versatility to cover any weaknesses for the Armor and Colossal," Hange mused. "Still, why Female?"

"Because no one can take something called the Boob Titan seriously," Ymir said dryly, getting a snort from Hange and an eye roll

from Levi while Erwin remained politely silent. Krista bit her tongue to not laugh.

"So, what do we call your Titan?" Levi asked, almost smirking… almost. "Or do you want to be known as the Hag Titan?"

Ymir snorted in amusement. "I'm the Jaw Titan. Small, fast, and bites like a bitch; Simple and to the point."

Krista bit back another barb and Ymir smirked a bit at her reaction, making the blond suppress a pout.

"That's eight then," Erwin commented. "I should assume that this last Shifter is the one stronger than the War Hammer?"

"Yeah, it's also the other one that's missing," Ymir answered with her arms crossed. "The Founding Titan."

"Founding Titan?" Hange repeated in interest, the name alone carried some weight to it.

Ymir nodded. "Supposedly the strongest of them all. They say it can actually control the Titans, even the Shifters."

There was an ominous silence at that explanation; even Hange froze at the possibility. If such a foe existed, even Erwin knew that humanity would fall easily to a coordinated and intelligent attack from the Titans.

"That sounds like a King of Titans to me," Levi stated with a furrowed brow. "And this one is missing?"

Ymir nodded. "No one has seen it since before your mighty walls went up."

Erwin peered at her for a moment. "I believe that is enough for now. Unless there is anything else you wish to reveal for now?"

Ymir took a deep breath of thought. "Just that you had the right idea putting me down here. Transforming in spaces like this is a bit risky," Ymir answered as a half-hearted attempt at reassurance.

Erwin nodded while Levi moved to take Krista back into the cell.

Ymir sighed at that. "Look, if you're going to keep doing that, can you at least let us share a cell?" Ymir requested.

"Fuck no," Levi answered bluntly.

"Why, afraid she'll sneak me something?" Ymir asked with an eye roll.

"Let me rephrase: No fucking. That's why," Levi retorted.

Krista turned red while Ymir sputtered for a moment, causing Hange to chuckle. "Sorry, but conjugal visits are off the table for now."

Ymir groaned. "You perverted old bats. We weren't going to do anything…" she muttered while Krista refused to speak.

"Said every brat ever," Levi said under his breath.

"That's enough you two," Erwin said with soft neutrality, almost looking apologetic to the two young girls for just a moment.

Ymir waited until the footsteps faded as the trio left the basement, to her relief. "Finally, that's over with," she remarked, leaning back. "Can you believe the nerve of those two?"

Silence was her only answer.

"Eh? You alright, Krista? Did the runt put your chains on wrong or something?" Ymir asked idly.

"What? How would he even-" Krista stopped her confused question, shaking her head. "Are we… really just going to pretend like nothing changed?"

"Well, we're back in cells, talking with a wall between us, so I assumed so," Ymir answered casually.

Krista narrowed her eyes. "Ymir, be serious. You're not the type to just change your mind that suddenly. You wouldn't give me anything before, now you're just… volunteering it?"

Ymir scratched her cheek as she rested the back of her head against the wall. "Promise not to say anything to them?"

"Of course. I promise," Krista answered, praying she could keep that promise.

"The other guards have looser tongues and louder voices than they think," Ymir answered with a snort. "I heard that they were going to decide if they should kill me in a day or so. So I made up my damn mind and decided to see if gambling on these assholes might not pay off."

That sounded right. That sounded like how Ymir might view the situation. So why did it all feel off to Krista?

"You don't believe me," Ymir noted with a frown. "What happened?"

"What do you mean?" Krista asked, concerned and a bit worried that Ymir had caught on.

"The midget was spooked before I told him I was willing to talk. What's got everyone worked up?" she inquired.

"… One of the captured Titans almost got free. It seemed deliberate," Krista explained with a curious frown.

"Eh? Eh?! They actually captured some Titans?" Ymir asked in surprise. "Those scouts really are crazy bastards."

Krista blinked, realizing that surprise was genuine. So, at bare minimum, Ymir didn't know about that happening.

"Oh… Oh, I get it. They think it can't be a coincidence that I gave up right after that happened," Ymir deduced with a sigh. "Well, that explains a lot."

"I mean… it does seem a bit too weird to happen at the same time," Krista agreed idly. "But if it's not related, why would anyone try something like that?"

"Could be the other Shifters," Ymir answered with a shrug.

Krista stiffened in alarm. "You think they're here?"

"Well, yeah? If the Colossal Titan was here, I'm assuming the other two were nearby too. And I doubt they left with everything going on in Trost," Ymir reasoned.

"But… what could they want on this side of the wall?" Krista asked herself in confusion.

Ymir hummed in thought. "They probably tried to kill the Titan so you can't learn more about them. That or they're just looking for me."

"You?" Krista repeated in interest. "Why would they be after you?"

Ymir took a breath. "I'm guessing to kill me. Or make sure I'm not talking at least."

"… is that why you didn't want to say anything before?" Krista asked softly.

"Part of it, yeah," Ymir answered honestly. "So, um, when can I start calling you Historia?"

"How about after we're sure you don't have to worry about being executed," Krista retorted with a smirk. "… Hey, Ymir? Do you… really not have a last name?"

"Hmm?" Ymir blinked before looking up. "Yeah, no… never really needed one. Why?"

"Well, after all those jokes about marrying me, I was wondering whose last name we'd be using," Krista remarked coolly.

Ymir nearly choked on her own breath. "Sweet shit, how long have you been hiding this snarky side of yours!?"

"Every day since we met," Krista answered with a chuckle. "I have a lot of jokes of my own saved up for you, Miss Jaws."

Ymir couldn't help but grin at the prospect. "What have I unleashed, and why didn't I do it sooner?"

Meanwhile

"Well, she's full of shit, but is she lying?" Levi mused to Hange and Erwin.

"It's entirely possible she's feeding us false intel," Erwin agreed with a frown. "But if not, then she might be the edge we need to not be caught off guard by more Shifters."

"She didn't give us a lot, but it's more than we'd ever learn on our own," Hange noted, scowling at the two men. "So, I'm not the best at reading humans, but you both noticed what she didn't answer, right?"

Levi crossed his arms with a troubled look in his eyes, Erwin nodding. "She knows exactly who the three are, but doesn't want to reveal who."

Silence reigned over them as they considered what that implied.

"If she's working against us, she is doing a piss-poor job of hiding it," Levi remarked idly. "Bad liar or not, it should have been easier to just say she had no idea who they were, instead of that weak-ass dismissal."

"But if she's not working against us, why not tell us?" Hange mused. "Unless, for some reason, telling us would be to our detriment right now?"

"I believe she already gave us an answer: Her own survival," Erwin remarked with a firm look in his eye. "If the Shifters discover she's with us, and we fail to deal with them in one blow, she will be their first target, and Trips their second."

"So, the brat isn't afraid of us, but them," Levi summarized. "So, in other words, we're never going to get much of anywhere while she's between a rock and a hard place."

"But how do we do that?" Hange inquired. "I mean, we can keep on threatening the girl, but I don't think she'll buy that much longer."

"Wouldn't help anyway," Levi opined. "She'd snatch her and run off the moment she got the chance if we turned her into a full-blown hostage."

"We'll deal with that after the meeting is over, and her fate decided," Erwin said. "For now, I'll go and relay what we've learned with Commander Pyxis. For now, continue as normal."

"Right," Levi said as Hange nodded, both of them making their leave.

Erwin cupped his chin as they left, letting his mind wander. His gut told him that Ymir's cooperation was genuine, even if conditional. He'd make plans if he was wrong, of course, but assuming he was right, that left some troubling implications; Namely, the Nine.

There being more Titan-Shifters was not the issue, it was Ymir's phrasing of certain ones, and her vagueness on other details. The Warhammer was secretive about its abilities. If it was reclusive, that just meant it stayed on its own, but secretive? That implied that it had other beings to keep its powers a secret from. And for the second strongest Titan, keeping itself secret from the other eight seemed a tad unlikely. So, outside the walls, there were more than just Shifters.

If he had that information not too long ago, he'd speculate that the "other beings" might be other giant creatures, like Eren. But Eren

was a human from inside the walls, who… somehow… got the ability to turn into a giant creature that was similar yet distinctly different from a Titan.

Which leads to what Ymir said about the Nine: When one dies, it gets passed on. The question was, how and who? Another Titan, obviously, but how did that power pass to them? Was it something physical, something that had to be digested? That could explain why Titans ate humans: Perhaps Titans instinctively sought out the nine to gain their power, and mistook humans for Shifters in human form? It was possible; it plugged up a few holes in the puzzle, but left others.

Finally, the two missing Titans; why were they missing? Missing from where? Erwin didn't know the full size of the outside world, but he knew it was massive. How did the Nine even keep track of each other, and how did one become considered "missing" among them?

More importantly, the one Titan that could control the Titans was missing, and had been since before the walls went up.

Everything about the way Ymir phrased that implied one thing to Erwin. And the implications were troubling, but it explained why Ymir was so hesitant to help them.

The Founding Titan was in the Walls already. No, rather, it had always been here. And Ymir was understandably afraid of facing the ire of the Ruler of the Titans.

But if that was true, that means one thing: That the extinction of the human race wasn't the Founding Titan's goal. It could have destroyed them ages ago if it was as powerful as Ymir implied. Even just a little coordination with the Titans would have made any and all expeditions impossible, leading to the absolute death of the Survey Corp.

This only raised more questions, especially the goal of breaching the walls by the enemy Shifters. Could this entire threat to their people

be nothing more than a war amongst the Shifters, with humanity in the crosshairs?

The more he learned, the more Erwin realized how little he truly knew.

And the more he was determined to learn the truth of this world one day.

Meanwhile

Sasha had many terrible experiences since joining the military. The days without meat, with barely any food had been terrible. Granted, she supposedly brought that on herself for being "potato girl" as some still called her. She loved meat, why was did they keep calling her a potato?

Of course… those were the times she could laugh and fake cry about. They were the terrible times she looked back on fondly, with the great times she had with her fellow cadets.

Trost… Trost had truly horrible memories here. The fighting hadn't been the worst of it. She barely remembered that in some ways, the rush of battle making her memories a blur. It was the time after that made it all so horrible. The moments when she realized so many of her friends and comrades were gone, eaten alive and dead.

It started in little ways. Wondering how Mina was doing or where Thomas was? Then it hit her again: they were dead. That was the… peculiar thing about death. Realizing you'd never see or speak to someone again, that they were gone and never coming back. It was a part of life, she knew that. She grew up around a hunting community; she knew that one wrong move could leave you in a grave.

But… there was just something horribly cruel about this. Dying in droves to Titans, picking up the dead corpses… finding the people who committed suicide out of fear of being eaten.

She pushed away the image of the woman and child from her head and refocused on the task at hand.

Or lack of one, to be exact. Still, there had been something calming about watching Eren sleeping, but his massive golden form was hardly visible in the darkness of night now. She could only make out an outline from where she sat; a bench in front of some stall that had been set up before everything went to hell.

She could still hear him though, his breathing. It was hard to ignore at first, because, well… Eren snored. According to Mikasa, he always had. But it was soothing, like a constant rumbling, a persistent gust of wind rattling a roof. It was kind of strange if she listened hard enough though. Eren had three heads, but she swore she could only hear two of them snoring. They were in sync though, so it just sounded like one most of the time.

… Sasha groaned, rubbing her head. That was even more confusing than it needed to be. Why did smart people like thinking so hard all the time if it just leads to circling headaches?

"Here."

Sasha looked up in surprise, seeing Mikasa holding out… a piece of bread.

Instantly her hands were wrapped around it, before she looked up at Mikasa reverently. "Thank you," she said, taking the food gratefully. Food always helped clear things up. "Mikasa, has anyone ever told you you're a goddess?"

"That's Krista," Mikasa responded calmly as she took a seat next to Sasha. "You can go to sleep. I'm fine watching him."

Sasha smiled gratefully at the stoic female. "You know, everyone says stuff about how you think only about Eren," Sasha remarked softly. "But then you do stuff like this and I know they're idiots."

Mikasa frowned minutely. Ever since Wall Maria fell, Eren and Armin had been the most important people in her life. The entire reason she was here, in the army, was to help them stay alive. She never intended or expected to become close to any of their fellow trainees in the training corps. But somewhere along the way, she had come to appreciate some of them. Sasha was one of them.

Choosing between Armin and Eren was a non-question. She'd save both of them, however, she had to. She would never forgive herself for abandoning either of them, and she knew they'd despise the idea of living at the expense of the other. But if she had to choose between saving Sasha against saving Armin or Eren? That was a question she didn't want to answer.

"Hey, Mikasa? Is it… weird, him being like this?" Sasha asked curiously. "Because you took it a lot better than everyone, even Armin."

Mikasa hummed, staring out into the darkness where Eren slept. "I don't understand it at all," Mikasa admitted plainly. "I just… really don't care. He came back. That's all that's important. Everything else, we can figure out eventually."

Sasha wondered, did Mikasa know how she looked right now, with that soft smile on her face, one hand on her scarf?

"Yeah, but… he's got three heads," Sasha reminded idly.

"That is hard to get used to," Mikasa admitted.

"I never know where I'm supposed to stare at or which I'm talking to," Sasha said with an exhausted look. "Or what he's saying. Me and Connie spent the whole day trying to guess what he was trying to say."

"Did you ever figure it out?" Mikasa questioned idly.

"Jean figured it out for us," Sasha answered with an embarrassed look. "He was trying to tell us that Connie's pants ripped open."

Mikasa chose not to comment on that statement.

"What are you going to do, whenever he figures out how to turn back?" Sasha asked thoughtfully.

Mikasa blinked, not sure how to answer that. The happy relief of Eren being alive was enough for her to ignore anything else about the situation, most of the time. But there was one thing she missed. "Sleep with him."

Sasha choked on her bread, looking at Mikasa in shock. "W-wow, Mikasa! I di-didn't think you'd be so bold!"

Mikasa looked at her in surprise before blushing scarlet. "N-not like that! I just…" Mikasa looked away, embarrassed as she pulled up her scarf. "M-me and Eren use to share a bed sometimes when we were younger."

"Oh," Sasha accepted, the silence growing very awkward. "Mikasa?"

"Yes," Mikasa answered knowingly.

"He's not snoring anymore," Sasha pointed out awkwardly.

"I'm aware, Sasha," Mikasa said, trying to remain stoic.

"Ahh, good, just making sure," Sasha said before turning to the darkness. "We know you're eavesdropping!"

A rather annoyed hiss rang in the air as three sets of green eyes appeared in the darkness, glaring in their direction.

"How did we not realize it was him earlier?" Sasha muttered. "The eyes, the temper, the "kill-all-Titans"ness."

The ground trembled as Eren's eyes raised higher, his form obviously standing up.

"Did I make him that mad?" Sasha asked in concern as Eren began to walk away.

Mikasa narrowed her eyes. "I don't think it's you he's bothered by," Mikasa stated warily as she grabbed a torch and began to run after Eren's sedated pace.

"H-hey, wait for me!" Sasha called, running after them, completely lost by what was going on.

As they grew closer, Eren's massive form came better into view as he lumbered forward in the dark. Mikasa caught the glint of one eye as he glanced down at her and Sasha before looking straight ahead as he walked.

"Where is he going?" Sasha asked out loud as she ran just behind Mikasa, who suddenly stopped and held an arm out to stop Sasha. "Wha-oh shit," Sasha said in slight fear as she realized there was a massive trench right in front of them. She glanced back to Eren and realized he was treading forth on a wooden bridge. "Wait, but why is he…?" Sasha wondered in realization.

Mikasa didn't answer as they followed behind Eren's twin tails, moving around him as they approached Eren's destination.

The breach. Eren was standing right in front of the boulder that he had used to plug the hole in the wall.

"He's… not trying to go outside, is he?" Sasha asked, alarmed but mostly confused.

"I don't think so," Mikasa answered, passing the torch to Sasha before using her ODM gear to scale the wall, bringing her to about Eren's eye level. "What is it? What's wrong?" Mikasa called out to him.

Eren didn't respond, just staring at the boulder with a strange look, like he was somehow suspicious of it. He slowly brought his head towards it, turning to place his ear holes along with it. Mikasa moved closer and began to listen as well.

Sasha nearly screamed as Eren suddenly jerked back in alarm, taking several massive steps back, making sounds of alarm that put Sasha on edge. "Umm, Mikasa?! What's going on!?" she called up.

Mikasa didn't answer, seemingly frozen in place before she descended down with a very, very dark look on her face. "Sasha, we need to go, now."

"Wait, what? Why what happened?" Sasha asked, looking between the pair and realizing that the giant Titan-killing lizard AND the best soldier she knew were both very, very shaken by… something.

Mikasa opened her mouth to urge Sasha to move before her eyes were suddenly wide in alarm. "Get down!" she yelled, diving at Sasha, tackling her as they both went tumbling into the trench.

And then the air was filled with explosions and bestial roars of pain.

Sasha's instincts took over, aiming her ODM gear to hook into the wall of the trench, looking up to see Eren falling backward with a resounding thud.

"Eren!" Mikasa yelled in alarm, even as another explosion went off.

Sasha squinted in alarm as she saw the flash in the darkness before another explosion emitted. "The cannons are firing at him!" Sasha yelled over Eren's screech of rage and pain.

That was the only prompt Mikasa needed, soaring to the side, out of the area before speeding up the walls at nearly inhumane speeds, even with ODM gear.

The night grew eerily silent, save for Eren's angry breathing. Tentatively, Sasha brought herself out of the trench and looked at Eren's form. She stiffened as she saw Eren lying on his stomach, two craters on his body from where the cannonballs had made their mark. It didn't look too terrible to Sasha, almost like a really nasty scab. It was the… other one that drew her alarm.

Eren's left-most head was laying limp on the ground, one of its horns blasted off, the scales and flesh blown away to reveal some of the skull. The other two heads were looking at the wounded third, looking understandably pained and more than a little furious.

"E-eren? You… you okay?" Sasha asked, swallowing thickly. Yes, this was a very aggressive, very wounded creature, and every instinct said she should probably stay away from him, but it was still Eren.

The third head groaned, looking at her with a weak look of… relief? Sasha blinked as she realized the wounded head was actually smiling at her, albeit smiling through the pain.

… He was happy she was alive.

He grunted as the strange, orange substance began to form on his wounds. It was only now as they started to heal that Sasha realized that though bone had been revealed, the skull itself didn't have a dent in it, not even a chip from the explosion.

"You really do have a hard head now, eh?" Sasha weakly joked.

The right head just glared at her while the left one grunted in amusement. The middle one snorted, grabbing her attention, before nodding up to the wall.

"Yeah, I'll go make sure Mikasa hasn't… killed anyone," Sasha said, meaning it as a joke, but realizing just how possible that might be by the end.

End of Chapter

So… yeah. Ymir revealed some things, Mikasa and Sasha had a heart to heart, and some idoit shot a cannon at Erendorah. Yeah, they are LUCK he doesn't have gravity beams yet, Eins probably would have vaporized someone.

But yeah, lot of weird and insteresting things going on as canon become more and more a distant memory. Anyway, hope you all enjoyed this.

Early viewing of chapters 13-14 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 13

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

NOTE: For the record, as some people still don't realize: Erendorah is currently smaller, wingless, and less durable than normal Ghidorah. As someone said it, he's basically a baby-Ghidorah in comparison.

"OUT OF MY WAY!"

Hange looked like she could rip through ultra-hard steel as she forced her way passed the soldiers, gathered some distance from the giant golden body. She rushed up and skidded to a stop in front of the resting form of their resident Titan killer; resting, and recently injured.

"Ohh, Trips, you poor thing! What have those barbarians done to you?" Hange said with an incredibly distraught look as she approached the head that was lying down. The brow was stained with black blood and one of its horns was still missing. "And it was the sweetheart too."

Drei groaned in his throat, an attempt at pained amusement, while Eins didn't even give her a glance as he was clearly glaring at the cannons atop of the wall. Zwei glanced to her, though, before staring off to the side with a neutral, guarded look. She blinked before following his gaze and, for the first time, noticed the large horn fragment that lay off to the side.

Unlike Sasha, she immediately noticed that the horn appeared to be devoid of any fragments from the skull. That was good, great even. It meant nothing really important was damaged. And Hange would take great delight in studying that piece of Eren later. Right now, they had

a situation to resolve. And for that, she needed to understand the situation.

"Ma'am."

Hange turned to see Mikasa standing before her, and for once, they seemed to be entirely on the same page.

"What happened and who needs to die?" Hange asked, dark and serious in her tone.

Mikasa was not bothered by it, for her look was at least as wrathful as Hange's, if not more.

"There was an incident where two of the cannons open fired on E-Trips," Mikasa answered flatly. "And they nearly caught me and Cadet Blouse in the attempt."

Hange balled her fist, giving Mikasa her utmost attention. "Tell me exactly what happened."

Both of them noticed the three heads focusing on them, Drei tilting himself to eye them better while Eins leaned in impatiently and Zwei merely watching on. They noticed but didn't react for the moment. After all, it was only right Eren knew what happened.

Flashback

Mikasa hadn't killed anyone.

"LET ME GO! LET ME GO, WE HAVE TO STOP IT!"

"Hold him down!"

But only because she wasn't the first on the scene, apparently.

A hysterical soldier was struggling against his comrades as he tried to get to the cannon. "Don't just stand there! Reload you idiots!" he screeched out desperately.

Two members of the cannon crew looked uncertain, another one having drawn his blades and pointed them at the soldiers. "Don't you idiots dare! I don't care if I have to cut off your hands, I'm not letting you try to kill that thing!" he yelled with his own look of fear and rage, making them flinch in uncertainty.

"It's trying to let the Titans in!" the man being held down screamed out. "We have to stop it before it moves the boulder!"

"Why would it do that!?" the blade wielder countered. "It saved Trost, it fucked over that-that-that Skinchanger of a Titan!"

"You think it's a friend?! A pet?! That thing doesn't care about us! It's just another monster and it'll turn on us the mo-!"

Everyone went silent as Mikasa suddenly leaped forward, her blades glinting in the light of the torches as she slashed…

"… No," the hysterical man whispered numbly.

… severing the firing wire, rendering the cannon unable to fire without a replacement.

"What is going on? Why were my comrades and I nearly hit by cannon fire?" Mikasa demanded sternly. "Who is in charge here?"

"You've… you've doomed us," the man said on the floor, holding his head, a distant look in his eyes.

"The captain here WAS in charge until a second ago when he lost it," one of the soldiers answered, frowning at Mikasa. "A cadet? You're one of the soldiers assigned to keep an eye on the big guy down there?"

"Yes, I am," Mikasa answered flatly, glaring down at the captain. "I'd ask why, but I believe I heard enough."

"We'll be eaten. The walls will come down. I've failed us all," he muttered unresponsively.

"Ignore him. What happened down there? Is the big guy okay?" the soldier asked with a frown.

"Yeah, he should be good."

Everyone turned to see Sasha landing on the wall. "Sasha? You mean he's…?" Mikasa asked in concern.

"Pissed off and a bit out of it, but it looks like he'll heal fine," Sasha assured, Mikasa sighing in relief.

"Thanks the walls," the soldier at the cannon said, lowering his own swords with a groan.

Mikasa took a step closer to the first soldier, giving him a dangerous look. "What. Happened?"

The soldier swallowed thickly, feeling like he was staring down a vicious animal and not a cadet. "We saw the big guy coming to the boulder. The captain started getting antsy, but we couldn't make out what he was doing down there. When I refused to pull the trigger, and the others wouldn't do it, he grabbed it before we could stop him," he explained, glancing at the other cannon several meters away. "The other crew just fired when we did, they assumed we saw something."

Mikasa understood that. She did. In a situation like this, when someone starts attacking something, their comrades generally join in on the assumption there is a good reason to be attacking. In the dark of night, of course they just followed the captain's lead. It didn't make her any calmer about the situation.

"He was trying to move the fucking boulder!" the captain screamed out suddenly. "Why else would he be there, touching it!?"

"Hey, Asshole!" Sasha yelled. "Did you think for a moment Trips thought it was coming loose?! That he was worried about them getting in too!?"

"How would you know?! You think you can understand that, that thing!?" the captain screamed. "I don't care if you say it can understand us! That doesn't mean it's not a monster!"

End of Flashback

"They knocked him out not too long after that, Sir," Mikasa explained solemnly as she repeated the story.

This time to Erwin, Pyxis, and her fellow cadets that were in the know.

"It seems that one of our soldiers cracked," Pyxis said in an unusually severe tone. "A captain, to make matter worse."

"I'll be sure to… verify his side of the story, thoroughly," Hange stated coldly, disturbing some of the others.

Erwin wasn't sure he had ever heard Hange quite so serious, in a murderous manner at least.

"But, he's alright, right?" Connie asked, glancing off the side of the wall to the shining, golden mass not too far from them.

Eren was no longer lying on the ground, merely standing off to the side. It was hard to tell, but he seemed tense. Especially the rightmost head, that one seemed like a coiled snake in some ways, on edge and preparing for another attack. The left head though, that one almost seemed… depressed? Lethargic? Maybe he was just woozy; Connie knew he was horrible at this.

"He's not very responsive to our questions, but he did answer yes to being alright," Erwin stated, seeing that the cadets weren't that convinced. "However, he is obviously upset about what happened."

"No kidding," Jean said with a snort. "I'd be pissed too if my ally shot a cannon at me," he said, looking to Mikasa in concern. "You sure you and Sasha didn't get hurt?"

Mikasa just nodded while Sasha rubbed her ear. "My ear is ringing a bit from the explosion, but they said that should go away," Sasha answered honestly, mostly unbothered.

"So, what do we do about this?" Annie asked idly, wanting to move the conversation along. "I feel like we weren't all called up here just for an update?"

Erwin nodded in agreement. "Yes, you're correct. This group has been kept rather informal for the moment due to how uncertain the situation is. However, this incident proves we need some procedures in place to keep things from escalating."

"We will be briefing all the soldiers soon," Pyxis began reassuringly. "And they will know that there is to be no attempt to attack the creature without approval from myself or Commander Erwin. And that if they have a concern, they should bring it to one of you."

"Are they really going to listen to a Cadet though?" Marco asked skeptically.

"In this case, they will have to," Erwin said with a scowl. "Any future attempts will result in the offenders being regarded as traitors."

"Well, that should keep most of them from doing something stupid," Reiner agreed under his breath. After all, here being a traitor meant being a "traitor to humanity" instead of just a traitor to a country.

"Also, we've been considering increasing those within your group," Hange said with a smile. "Do any of you see a problem with Bertholt Hoover or Krista Lenz joining us?"

"Bert?" Reiner said in surprise before turning to relief. "Well, glad that's over. Been kind of awkward, not being able to explain why we're the ones guarding Scales."

"Why didn't we go with that codename?" Hange murmured to herself in thought.

"Umm, Commanders?" Armin spoke up in concern. "I'm not sure if you're aware, but Krista Lenz is rather… close to Ymir."

"Are you suggesting she knew?" Annie asked with a scowl.

"I don't want to think so, but we can't rule it out, can we?" Armin pointed out reluctantly. "But even if she isn't, well, what do we say about Ymir's… situation."

"Armin, I don't think we have to worry about that," Connie stated flatly.

"Huh? What are you talking about?" Jean asked with a frown.

"Well, the commanders and… Sorry, Ma'am, I forget your rank, but they're smiling like they already knew that," Connie pointed out.

Hange waved off the apology in amusement while Erwin gave a brief nod. "Indeed, Cadet Springer. However, it is good to be cautious in times like this, so your concern is appreciated Cadet Arlert," Erwin assured

"Is there anything else?" Pyxis questioned, eyes scanning over each of them.

No one spoke up, having no objections and clearly with minds preoccupied with recent events.

"Very well, you're all dismissed, except for Ackerman," Erwin instructed. None of the cadets looked all that surprised. After all, Mikasa was the main one at the scene last night.

"Of course, this does leave a rather important question in the air unanswered," Pyxis stated once the other cadets had left, leveling a look at Mikasa.

"Mikasa? I don't know how you feel about the commanders, but I think you know I trust him," Hange said, nodding down to Eren's form

below. "So I hope you know I'm asking this without doubting him: Why was he near the boulder to begin with?"

Mikasa had a dark look on her face as she met their gaze. Not angry so much as… on edge. "Eren woke up last night and approached the boulder. He placed his head… heads on it. Not to move it, more like he was… listening for something. Something outside the wall," Mikasa explained.

Erwin narrowed his gaze. "Do you know what he heard?"

Mikasa nodded slowly. "I used my gear to land on the wall, to get closer to the boulder," Mikasa explained, pausing as if reliving something in her head. "We could hear… something outside, in the breach. It didn't sound like a Titan. It was strange… like something was gurgling and licking."

Hange frowned. She had seen plenty of abnormals, but that did seem rather odd even for them. "Did you warn any of the other soldiers?"

"No," Mikasa admitted. "I was too busy making sure the crews didn't try to kill Eren."

"What makes you so sure it wasn't just a Titan?" Pyxis asked idly.

"I wasn't finished, sir," Mikasa informed respectfully. "When we were still listening, we both heard something… speak."

No one said anything, almost unable to process what Mikasa claimed. "S-speak?" Hange repeated. "As in you heard a voice?"

Mikasa nodded slowly. "Just barely, but yes. Like it somehow knew we were there, listening to it."

"Well, what did it say?" Pyxis asked, wondering why this normally straightforward soldier was beating around the bush.

"… Yeager. It said his name, Yeager."

Meanwhile

"So… why Krista Lenz?"

"Huh?" Krista tilted her head towards the wall, knowing Ymir was on the other side. "What do you mean?"

"Just wondering. There a reason your fake name is Krista Lenz?" Ymir asked curiously.

Krista frowned in thought. "Yeah… yeah, there is," she answered with a distant voice.

"You okay? Bad Memory?" Ymir asked in concern.

"Not in the way you mean. Just kind of hard to recall," Krista answered. "When I was little. There was a book I read, filled with stories. One of them was a girl named Krista Lenz."

Ymir raised an eyebrow, feeling something nudging at her thoughts. "Oh? What was the story about?"

"About a girl that wanted to be helpful and loved by everyone," Krista said with a small smile. "Someone ladylike."

"Krista…?" Ymir questioned in concern.

"The story went that she made a deal so that she would be able to bring protection and prosperity to her people," Krista continued, almost automatically

Ymir's eyes widened as dots began to connect. It wasn't possible, right? There was just too big of a coincidence, right? "A deal with… who, exactly?"

"I think it was called a devil," Krista remarked idly, smiling a small bit. "But it looked more like a big goblin or something, wearing a cloak and holding… something. I think it was a torch? Might have been a lantern?"

Ymir barely heard her, processing what she just heard. She knew that story or some version of it. She had heard people speak of the stories Marley taught as fact, but for some reason, the name Ymir Fritz was changed to Krista Lenz in this story. Why? Was it important?

More importantly, did that… imply something about Krista? About her family? Because if it did, then…

Ymir lost all color in her face.

"Ymir? You alright?" Krista asked with a worried tone.

Realizing she had been silent for too long, Ymir forced herself to smile and hope her voice was convincing. "Y-yeah, just trying to imagine you making a deal with a devil," she admitted with a forced snort. "But, what even was the deal? What did she have to give up?"

"That was the confusing part, because- and I remember this part distinctly because it confused me so much- she had to grow an apple the devil gave to her," Krista explained.

Ymir focused on that, but almost lost it again at the implication. "Oh? Did you… ever figure it out?" she asked idly, trying so hard to sound coy.

Krista rolled her eyes. "Yes, I know. She was "given his seed" as it were," Krista said with a snort. "It makes sense, I guess."

"… What?" Ymir asked in confusion.

"Well, I'm the bastard of some noble family. Of course, they had a story like that. It's basically some tale about a girl having to marry someone she didn't like for the good of her people, or something like that," Krista explained with a sigh. "And I can't say I don't understand the logic."

Ymir frowned. "Don't tell me you'd take that deal."

"Depends on the deal, I guess," Krista said with a sigh. "I mean, imagine if someone offered the power to end the Titans? Or…" Krista trailed off.

"Or?" Ymir asked intently.

Krista scratched her cheek, debating if she should say it. "… Can I ask you something first?"

"Y-yeah?" Ymir asked, feeling very focused on Krista now.

"Would you… hate being human? Just human?"

Ymir froze as she started to understand. "No… no I wouldn't," she admitted, feeling herself fumbling as she knew where this going. "Are you saying… you'd make a deal with the devil… just to make me human again?"

Krista smiled idly. "Well… It wouldn't be that bad. You always talk about marrying me, but you never say what'd we'd do about kids."

Ymir nearly jumped at that, rattling her chains. "EH?! Where did that come from!?" she asked with a blush on her face.

"Oh my walls, I wish I could see your face!" Krista said with a chortle of laughter.

Ymir panted a bit before allowing herself to smirk. "You're just determined to give me a heart attack, aren't you?"

"Nope! You're just adorable flustered," Krista teased.

"A-adorable!? Me?! Fuck off, you pint-sized witch," Ymir shot back good-naturedly.

"Yes, really, fuck off."

Krista leaned to the side and spied Levi returning with Petra and Oluo. "Eh? That you shrimpy?"

"And Petra, and the one who kept biting his tongue," Krista answered.

"Oi, show some damn respect you brats," Oluo scolded with an eyebrow twitch.

"I'm sorry, Sir, but you… never actually told us your name," Krista pointed out.

Petra smirked in approval as Oluo simmered, trying to recall if he had indeed forgotten to mention his name. Levi, however, paid this all no mind. "We need to talk," Levi said as he opened Krista's cell.

"Hey, I already agreed I'd talk," Ymir reminded with a scowl.

"Stop your squirming, Jaws," Levi remarked as he feigned removing the bonds from Krista. "This isn't related to you, and she's not in trouble."

"Oh. Well, okay, have fun with shrimpy, Krista," Ymir called off.

"Try not to make Petra mad again!" Krista called back as Levi led her out.

"Yes, try not-" Petra paused as she stood in front of Ymir's cell and squinted. "-to. Are you okay? You're looking pale?"

"Living underground does that," Ymir remarked with a smirk. "Relax, just some of that shit you fed me not agreeing with me."

Petra didn't look convinced but merely took her place sitting in the chair opposite the cell. "If you say so."

Ymir rolled her eyes as she ran a hand over her face, hoping some of her own dread wasn't showing.

She thought that Krista and her connection to the higher-ups in the Walls might give Krista some leverage to get some kind of life

outside the walls. That she was important enough to be worth sparing.

But there was such a thing as being too important.

If Krista- no, If Historia was a bastard of the royal bloodline, a descendant of the Fritz family then Marley would have a fate worse than death in store for her, Ymir was almost certain. Even ignoring the very real possibility of torturing her just for her bloodline…

Ymir didn't know everything about the Titans, not by a longshot. But she knew that there was a reason that the Nine were kept in certain bloodlines. That certain abilities responded best to hosts of certain descent. At least, that was some of the things she had heard and read about during her days of being worshipped like a goddess by that cult. If that held true then the Founding Titan only responded best to the Royal Family.

And if Marley was after the Founder, they needed royal blood to use its full power.

They'd definitely use Krista to make more royal blood. The idea haunted Ymir's mind: Historia, in a cell not unlike this, chained like she was now, and forced to wait…

Wait to give birth or wait to be… given someone's seed.

She gave a trembling smirk as she realized, without a doubt, she had made the right choice.

Meanwhile

Everyone gave them a wide birth. Their friends were gone, probably some meeting about what happened. They weren't included.

[[[They probably think we're still healing.]]]

[[Or pissed off.]]

[We are!]

Eins growled to himself while Drei snorted.

[[[Calm down. I was the one that lost a horn.]]]

[You're me and I'm you, and so is he!]

[[We all lost a horn.]]

[[[And yet, I'm not that mad about it.]]]

[Well why not!?]

Drei shared a look with Zwei before they glanced to Eins, who begrudgingly got their meaning.

[[[[We were expecting this to happen.]]]]

Humans were fearful, ignorant, and quick to lash out. He knew this very well, having seen some of the worst and best of humanity after the Fall of Maria. He knew eventually there would come a point where someone in the humans would lash out at him.

[[At least it was like this.]]

[…?!]

[[[He means that someone cracked, instead of the military just trying to kill us.]]]

[… True. But what do we do if they try that again?]

[[What do you want to do? Throw giant rocks at the walls with our mouths?]]

[… I mean, it's an idea.]

[[[No.]]]

[You know that the only way to survive is to fight!]

[[[Yeah, but…]]]

[[None of us are wrong.]]

Both side heads looked to the middle one, who scolded at the ground in thought.

[[We won't just lie down and die for them if they turn on us, but we shouldn't give them more reasons to be threatened by us.]]

[[[It'd be easier if we could talk. I mean, I know they might not listen, but…]]]

[Yeah, yeah. Why the hell can Ymir talk at all in that form, but we can only growl and grunt?]

[[Different vocal cords, probably.]]

[That was rhetorical and you know it!]

[[And you know I'm just responding to distract us, so stop you're complaining.]]

Eins rolled his eyes. They had been fairly in sync in what they thought ever since they made Mikasa and the others realize who they- he was. But taking a cannonball to the head had divided them more than before. Eins was perpetually pissed off by the entire event, while Drei was just resigned and accepting of what happened. Zwei was stuck meditating as he did his own musing. They were still Eren, but the three parts of Eren were very much out of harmony about the situation…

"Yeager…"

… And, if they were all being honest, they were ignoring the bigger, more alarming problem.

"Yeager…"

The voice from last night slithered in his head like a damn ghost.

"Yeager…"

What was it? What was out there? Was it another shifter?

"Yeager…"

Or was it… something else? Something like himself? But most importantly…

"I'm here, Yeager…"

[[[[How did it know my name!?]]]]

They felt a frustrated snarl forming on all of their maws. Something out there knew who he was and somehow knew that he had become this… thing now. But how!?

[[[[… We have company.]]]]

The three all noticed it at once, the approach of a mostly familiar group. They allowed the tension to roll off their scales and turn their minds away from that unanswerable question… for now, at least.

"Oooh, Trips!" Hange yelled with an enthusiastic wave.

All three heads stared down as Eren regarded them with some fondness and a great deal of relief. Being alone with himselves wasn't appealing at the moment.

[[[And there's Armin.]]]

Indeed the blond boy was trailing behind the section commander, along with another short blond.

[[Krista?]]

[[[Haven't seen her since we saved her.]]]

[You think they told her about Ymir?]

The three aspects of Eren put that aside for now as they arched their heads downwards to get a better look at the trio. This was why he preferred it when they spoke to him from rooftops, it felt more… normal if he didn't have to look that far down just to have a conversation with them; As much of a conversation as he could have in any case.

Hange was her usual self again and Armin looked relieved to see him, while Krista had a very… awkward air about her.

"It's good to see you up and about, Handsome! I trust you're filling all better?" Hange asked with a grin.

[[[[More or less.]]]]

Eins tilted his head to imitate a shrug while Zwei and Drei nodded, Drei's being a bit more lethargic than Zwei's.

"Umm, Section Commander?" Armin spoke up curiously.

"Just Hange is fine, Armin," Hange assured as she waved the boy on.

"Didn't you say one of his horns was missing?" Armin asked, squinting at the heads.

"… Eh?" Hange blinked, as did all three of Eren's heads, the other two leaning over to examine the third.

[[[Is it back already?!]]]

[I look away for one hour and it's done regrowing!?]

[[I thought it'd be weeks before it looked the same!]]

[[[[The hell?! Amazing, but the hell?!]]]]

"Ahhh, how could I be so stupid!" Hange bemoaned, slapping her own forehead. "I missed a chance to document an important aspect of his healing factor!"

Armin just stared on awkwardly as Hange and Eren, all three of them, were equally baffled and impressed by the latter's healing factor.

"Hehehe."

The display was cut short by the soft laughter of Krista Lenz, regathering their attention.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't laugh," Krista apologized, feeling far less intimidated than she did a few minutes ago.

[You try waking up like this and not be surprised.]

[[[Hush.]]]

"Yes, well," Hange spoke up and regathered herself. "We've decided to bring more into this little group. More from the 104th actually. I've heard you two already… met, shall we say?"

"Yes, Section Commander, I've told you about being in his mouth repeatedly," Krista said with a sigh before smiling up at the golden behemoth. "I guess I should say thanks for saving me, Eren."

All of them stiffened, staring at Krista in surprise.

[[[[Did she just…?]]]]

"Is everything alright?" Krista asked uncertainly, glancing between the three… well, five since she looked to all three heads as well.

"How… did you know who he is?" Armin asked slowly while pointing at Eren, all three heads nodding in bewildered agreement.

Krista blinked, looking at everyone again. "I mean… it's not obvious?"

[Should I feel insulted?]

[[You should feel confused.]]

[[[I'm a little impressed.]]]

"Really?" Hange asked curiously, glancing at Armin, who looked just as bewildered.

"What gave it away?" Armin asked, trying not to sound off-put that Krista noticed it instantly when he didn't.

"I'm… not sure how you can't tell. The way he's acting, that's clearly Eren," Krista said, motioning to him as if it was as obvious as the sun in the sky.

[[[… Okay, maybe feel insulted.]]]

[No, NOW I'm confused.]

[[Shut up both of you.]]

"Plus, Eren is the only one I can imagine arguing so much with himself," Krista added on, a bit apologetically, while the heads glared at one another.

Eins, Zwei, and Drei all paused at that and grimaced before snorting in reluctant admission.

[[[[Okay, granted.]]]]

"Well, now that that is out of the way," Hange said, despite being still bewildered. "We're calling him Trips for the time being while no one knows who he actually is."

"… Okay?" Krista answered, glancing between Hange and Eren with a very skeptical and confused expression.

"Is something wrong?" Hange asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Well, just about anyone that knows Eren will figure out it's him fairly fast," Krista pointed out.

Armin grimaced before putting on a reassuring smile. "Well, the group is currently just us from the 104th, those that were in Trost and know Eren well."

"Oh. Okay, well, that'd be most that could recognize him, I think," Krista mused. "So, what do we do, exactly?"

[[[Follow us around.]]]

[[Interpret us.]]

[And, you know, help make sure no one shoots us with cannons!]

"What's wrong?" Armin asked, looking to the clearly annoyed Eins.

Krista raised an eyebrow. "I think he's still upset about getting shot?" she pointed out slowly.

Eins nodded in confirmation, his brow furrowing.

"Oh," Armin said, a suspicion growing in the back of his mind. He glanced to Zwei who was eyeing Krista oddly. The middle head caught his look but didn't give any response as it observed Krista.

"Yes, well, it's mainly having eyes on him while keeping the peace between him and the other soldiers, let them know what he's doing so they don't overreact like last night," Hange explained idly.

"He needs help for that?" Krista asked in surprise. "After everything he did to close the breach, you'd think-"

[[… Should we tell her what she tastes like?]]

[The fuck?!]

[[[Eh!?]]]

While Eins and Drei gave Zwei startled looks, Krista sputtered a bit and cleared her throat. "Y-you'd think they'd be giving him the benefit of the doubt."

[[[… Wait a minute.]]]

All three heads leaned down a bit more, staring at the small female human with rather intense looks.

"Trips?" Hange asked curiously but made no move to stop whatever was going on.

[There's no way, is there…?]

"E-Eren, what is it?" Krista asked nervously.

Armin looked between the giant reptile and the small cadet as his suspicions came to the surface. "Krista… can you… understand him?"

Krista blinked, looking at Armin owlishly. Slowly, she pointed up at the three-headed beast while staring at her fellow blond. "You can't?"

End of Chapter

… Okay, so yeah. Something outside the gate said Eren's name, and Krista can understand Eren. I knew I was going to do this since Krista went in Eren's mouth(lol) and decided to keep Eren's thoughts unseen until the chapter that Krista found out she could hear Eren.

So, yeah, the plot is offically speed up again. Erendorah's Slice-of-Kaiju-Life phase is coming to an end as several things boil to a head.

Oh, yeah, and Ymir realized that Krista's fate outside the walls might have worse than just dying behind the walls, due to the royal blood. I figure that book that Frieda gave Historia/Krista is probably the last one or so on the isalnd, and would be a good hint to Ymir about Krista's true origins.

PS I love writing Eins, Zwei, and Drei conversing again. I don't know why, but I do. Anyway, hope you all enjoyed this!

Early viewing of chapters 14-15 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 14

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

Eren reeled back, all three jaws opened in shock.

[[[[HOLY SHIT, SHE CAN HEAR ME?!]]]]

"Y-yes! I can! Now not so loud!" Krista yelled over Eren's startled calls, covering her ears.

[[[Sorry, sorry!]]]

[Finally! No more fucking charades!]

Armin and Hange watched the exchange with numb disbelief, trying to register that Krista understood what Eren was saying!

[[How and why you of all people!?]]

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean?" Krista asked with a frown, uncovering her ears.

"What is what supposed to mean?!" Hange interrupted, suddenly grabbing Krista by the shoulder and shaking her with a mad gleam in her eyes. "Don't hold back on me now! What's he saying!? Tell me everything!"

"Section Commander, calm down!" Armin said urgently, trying to put himself between the two.

[[[[Hange, if you mess this up, I'm throwing you over the wall!]]]]

"H-he's afraid you're going to make me unable to hear him?" Krista translated with an uncertain, shaken voice.

Hange abruptly stopped shaking the blonde, ripping her own hands off the girl as if she were on fire. "Right, right. We have no idea what's allowing this to work. You might accidentally… stop it yourself if too much stress is applied," Hange noted absently, her eyes possessing a distant focus to them.

Armin sighed in relief as things finally started to calm down. Cautiously, he looked around. There were some soldiers watching them in the distance, but none of them seemed particularly alarmed or surprised. That was the good thing about Hange's… eccentricities. No one questioned when anything she did caused a ruckus. And after a few days of Hange around Eren, no one was surprised to hear the giant creature freaking out a bit.

Especially not after Hange tried to pry a scale off of Eren without permission. Or warning.

"Hange, if we want to keep this a secret, you might not want to have this conversation here," Armin pointed out carefully.

Hange was very self-aware in some cases. She was very aware that she could be very loud and draw a lot of attention when excited. That said, she was also a disciplined soldier when needed. "I'm fine now," Hange promised, her tone serious as she leveled Krista with a scrutinizing stare.

Krista swallowed; she didn't need to read minds to know what Hange was thinking. It was too suspicious, too coincidental; her relationship with Ymir and now her ability to understand Eren. All the good trust she had garnered with Hange and the others might have just burnt to ashes.

Hange's eyes went over to Eren, the three heads craned down and gazing at them with very mixed expressions. "I take it you don't know how this happened?" Hange asked to her large study-specimen.

Zwei and Drei shook their heads. Eins hesitated.

Hange observed with contained amusement as the middle and left heads looked to the right with confusion and then contemplation before their eyes fell back to Krista before they started to, well, talk to the short cadet.

"He, um, he thinks that it might have something to do with me being in his mouth," Krista answered nervously.

Hange didn't acknowledge her, not until Eren nodded to show that was indeed what he said. She hummed, cupping her chin. If that was the case, then nothing had changed. They had suspected something because Ymir revealed herself after Eren saved Krista. This could simply be a consequence of that.

[I felt a jolt.]

"What?" Krista said, blinking as she looked to Eins. "What do you mean, a jolt?"

"Does he mean when you were… in his mouth?" Armin asked, getting a nod from Eren.

Krista suddenly flushed as Eins continued, all three heads now looking fairly uncomfortable. "He, um, thought it was just from tasting… me," she explained in embarrassment. "But yeah, the one that caught me felt it, the other two didn't notice."

Hange almost smirked at that, but kept herself focused. "A jolt, eh?" she murmured thoughtfully.

"Well, there is… one thing we haven't considered," Armin said, looking a bit sheepish himself now.

[[[I don't like that look]]]

[[He knows we're not going to like this.]]

[Please don't say someone else should crawl in my mouth.]

"Mikasa said that Krista was… wrapped up by his tongue," Armin reminded slowly, making Krista blush harder. No one had told her that specific detail. "I don't understand why this would work, but… could it be from coming in contact with his tongue?"

[[[[… That's even worse!]]]]

"Er-Trips isn't… thrilled with testing that idea," Krista informed casually.

"And for once, I don't blame him," Hange said with a grin. "But we'll have to put a pin in that potential experiment. Right now, I have to inform the commanders that we have a proper line of communication formed," she said before turning disturbingly serious. "In the meantime, you two are to stay here and are not to leave Trips no matter what."

"Understood, Ma'am," Armin and Krista both saluted.

"Oi! That order goes for you too, big guy!" Hange called over to Eren. "You don't let Krista out of your sight, got it?"

All three heads nodded. No translation needed.

"Good. Now, if anyone asks, I'm off to organize a team to take that horn piece away for studying. Which is also true," Hange said before turning to leave.

The pair of blondes watched the scout leave awkwardly until she was out of hearing range.

"Dammit."

Armin and Drei snapped their gazes to Krista, while Eins and Zwei looked at her curiously.

"Why is all of this happening to me?" Krista muttered in annoyance.

Eins snorted while Zwei now cocked his head at the girl.

[[[[… Really?]]]]

"Eren, I'm sorry you've been going through a lot of shit too, but I really don't need this right now," Krista said as she cupped her face in her hands. "Ohhh, Walls. They're going to think I'm hiding something again."

"Again?" Armin question with a frown. "You mean about… her?"

There was a rumble in Zwei's throat.

Krista winced at the sound and the emotion within. "I didn't know," Krista said simply. "And I don't think I'm allowed to talk about that."

"Right," Armin said in acceptance. Armin took this chance to take in Krista. She was… different from when he remembered. The way she talked had a few blunter and sharper edges to it, instead of the ever kind and ever patient demeanor she usually had. But her eyes had dark circles under them and her body seemed rigid and weary, not to mention she looked like she was still in shock from being able to understand Eren.

Armin came to two conclusions. Either Krista was a traitor or she wasn't. If she wasn't, she had been through her own share of headaches and problems since the Battle of Trost. If she was, she was on guard now, and well aware that her life was in danger if her cover was blown.

In neither case was it wise to leave her like this. Putting her at ease would either help her relax or lower her guard.

"So, does he actually sound like himself? His voice I mean?" Armin asked curiously as he glanced up at Eren.

"Huh?" Krista looked up at Armin before glancing up at the reptile, who was giving her three different looks of curiosity. "Umm, yeah? It's a bit deeper, and like he's growling out every word, but it's definitely still him."

[[Interesting.]]

[[[I was wondering that too.]]]

[I didn't care to begin with.]

"Okay, seriously, you don't hear that?" Krista asked in bewilderment, raising her hand in Eren's direction. "What does that sound like to you?"

Armin blinked. It hadn't dawned on him just yet how weird this had to be from Krista's side. What were just animal noises to everyone else, were complete sentences to her. "All I can hear are growls and hisses, things like that," Armin answered thoughtfully. "Why, what'd he say?"

"I have no idea, all three of him were saying different things," Krista said with a sigh before perking up. "Wait, so… he hasn't been able to speak to anyone… since Trost?" Krista asked slowly. Armin's nod prompted her to look to the massive golden beast once more. "Got anything to say, Ere- er, Trips?"

[[[[Why couldn't you have brought your gear?]]]]

Armin raised an eyebrow at the exasperated and disappointed looks from the heads on either side. "He's mad because we didn't bring the ODM, right?"

Krista looked to him oddly. "I thought you couldn't…?"

"I can guess him a lot of the times, same as Mikasa," Armin explained idly, getting an amused snort from Drei. "He likes it when we talk to him from the rooftops."

"Why would… oh," Krista started before stopping herself, catching his meaning. "I guess it would be nice to not be looking up so much."

"And you don't have to worry about the tails," Armin added in with a small smile.

"Tails?" Krista repeated, glancing to the rear appendages. "Right, he does have two tails… why two tails and three heads?"

[[[Hange thinks we might grow another one day,]]]

[I hope not.]

[[Two is enough, anymore and I'll wake up with them in knots, I know it.]]

Krista snorted and laughed into her hand from the mental image, getting a chuckle from Drei.

"Do I want to know?" Armin asked with a smile.

"N-nothing," Krista said with a wave of her hand. "But seriously, you must have something you want to say while I'm here."

"It's okay if he doesn't, Krista," Armin assured with a grimace. "It'll take some getting used to, you telling us what he's saying."

Krista was about to say something when Eren interrupted. "He says no, he was just debating on waiting to say it to both you and Mikasa at the same time," Krista explained.

Now Armin was curious. What could Eren have to say to both of them?

The three heads glanced back and forth amongst one another before coming to a consensus, turning towards Krista and beginning to speak.

The male blond took in all three expressions well. Eins was begrudging, almost apologetic, like Eren when he was younger and caught doing something stupid. Zwei was almost solemn in his contemplative visage, like Eren during his calmer and more serious moments. Drei had a look of bitter amusement, as Eren did while healing wounds from bullies he had tried to fight on his own.

Krista's eyes slowly went wide before composing herself as she addressed Armin with a small smile. "He says, 'Sorry you had to put up with me all these years.'"

"What?" Armin said in shock, looking back up at his friend in surprise. "Where is that coming from?"

Krista paused as Armin answered, her smile growing just a bit. "Three parts of me have all endured being separated and forced to live with each other. I know I'm a rash, overly emotional idiot that doesn't think things through," Krista said, trying to keep a straight face. Eren grunted at her again. "Look, let me leave out some of the swear words, okay?"

Armin just stared, processing that Eren had more or less said those words, before turning embarrassed and unconfident. "Come on, Eren, don't say stuff like that. You and Mikasa are the ones that had to deal with me being dead weig-"

[[[But you're not!]]]

[You're not!]

[And you never were.]

Krista winced at the rather urgent response that cut Armin off. "Yeah, he doesn't think that, at all," she explained, Armin smiling self-deprecatingly. "Guys? I honestly don't mind this, but if this gets emotional, I'm pretty sure we're going to draw too much attention."

"R-right, let's change the subject for now," Armin agreed readily, forcing his smile on.

Eins was more than a little displeased by the abrupt and unsatisfying end to that conversation, though Zwei begrudgingly agreed with Krista. Drei, however…

[[[So, are you teaming up with Annie again?]]]

Krista looked to the head in surprise before looking to Armin. "You and Annie teamed up for something?"

"Oh, yeah, we usually take shifts watching over Eren in pairs. Annie was with me last time," Armin elaborated. "And I don't know, she's used to teaming up with Reiner at night and it was just because we had to change the usual teams up…"

[[[Krista, little help here?]]]

[What is up with you?]

Krista eyed the toothy grin on Drei for a moment, the other two heads giving their third strange looks. "… He says you might want to consider asking to switch with Reiner," Krista said with a knowing smile. "She seemed like she was enjoying your company more."

"Huh? Really? You think so? I mean, Trips thinks so?" Armin asked in surprise, looking back up at the three heads.

Drei nodded in agreement, as did Zwei and Eins with less enthusiasm.

[[[[Not really a lie.]]]]

"Well… it might not be a bad idea," Armin accepted thoughtfully.

He completely missed the smirks shared between Drei and Krista before they schooled their expressions.

"So… are the rumors true?" Krista asked suddenly. "Did Hange really stab a sword up his butt?"

[[[[Can we not talk about that? Ever?]]]]

"I… can guess what he said," Armin said with a chuckle.

Meanwhile

Something was wrong… very, very wrong.

Levi only had to look outside the walls of Trost to know that was true.

"Captain, what exactly are we looking for?" Eld asked with a frown.

"Four-eyes didn't exactly give a lot of details," Oluo grunted.

"And you both haven't noticed yet?" Levi remarked in disapproval.

"Of course I did, Captain," Oluo said with a smirk while Eld raised an eyebrow. "There are no Titans around here."

A bit of an oversimplification, but true; Levi scanned the ruins just outside Trost and couldn't spy any Titans there, or along the side of the wall.

And that was strange. District walls, especially this southern one, normally had Titans clawing around it at all times. Even after the Battle of Trost, there had been plenty stumbling about or even in the gap of the closed breach.

But the Titans hadn't just vanished entirely; there were some in the distance, either out in the fields or along the main ring of Wall Rose. For this area to be vacant, something had to have happened.

"And no one noticed anything happening?" Eld asked skeptically.

"Whatever happened, it was last night. All the soldiers were too busy looking at the golden lizard to be bothered by anything going on out here," Levi remarked with distaste.

"Yeah, I heard about that. Besides from Hange I mean," Oluo stated, dropping his Levi-imitation for a second. "I'm going to guess we're here to figure out why Trippy was over here?"

"That'd be my guess," Levi agreed. "Keep your guard up. Titans aren't our only concerns anymore."

His subordinates nodded and, as one, the three of them descended off the wall, using their gear to ease their descent and move half way down the wall.

"Titans definitely died here," Eld stated with a frown, spotting several imprints in the ground that were vague human shaped, but giant in size.

"I don't like this," Olou muttered. "What kills Titans so fast and quiet like that?"

"I'm going to guess whatever left that."

Both turned to their captain, suspended just above the hole where the gate used to be.

Oluo didn't see it at first. Between the Colossus's giant imprints and the many Titans that had walked through here, it just looked like a mess of overlapping, giant footprints. But then he saw the abnormal tree in the forest of Titans.

"Captain, the hell is that?" Olou asked, his head jerking up suddenly and scanning the area again.

"A footprint, Oluo," Levi answered simply.

Eld's eyes widened as he noticed it as well. "That… can't be a Titan's, can it?"

Levi didn't answer. It could be the Beast Titan for all he knew, but he got the feeling that wasn't the case.

"We need to report this. And have some assholes actually keeping watch out here."

The two nodded in silence, but none of the three dared to move.

"Sir?" Eld questioned, tension in his voice.

"We're being watched," Levi confirmed bluntly, eyeing the town. His instincts screamed that they were being observed… stalked even. But for all his skill, he couldn't spot from where.

"What are the odds it's another thing like Trips, wanting to help?" Olou asked doubtfully.

Levi let that question hang unanswered. "Up the wall. But not too suddenly."

The other two obeyed as they climbed up the wall, the tension never quite leaving them until they were securely on top of Rose once more.

"You two stay here. Keep an eye on things. See if our uninvited guest tries to slip out of hiding," Levi remarked sternly. "Unless you find out it can climb the walls, don't engage."

"Sir," both saluted obediently.

Levi turned to leave, giving a look down into Trost, finding the golden brat. The three heads were leaning down, fixated on two cadets. He looked fully healed now from taking two cannonballs, and it wasn't even noon.

Something interesting must have happened though. The brat didn't seem nearly as moody as he had been earlier.

He absently wondered what.

Meanwhile

Krista had fallen from the walls and landed into the jaws of a giant, non-Titan monster.

This was somehow more terrifying than that.

[[[[Krista, tell her.]]]]

She shouldn't be surprised. Why was she surprised?

Armin shared an awkward look to Krista as they looked to the new arrival.

"Is something wrong?" Mikasa asked with a frown as she glanced between the sheepish Armin, the stiff-as-a-board Krista, and Eren's three heads that were staring rather pointedly at Krista.

"Oh, no, nothing is wrong," Armin answered with a tight smile. This wasn't a bad thing, really, but how did he broach the topic of Krista being able to understand Eren to Mikasa?

[[[[Tell her, dammit!]]]]

And Eren's impatience wasn't helping the situation.

Mikasa raised an eyebrow as Eren's scaly visages grew increasingly annoyed. "Does he not trust her?" Mikasa asked to Armin.

"No, no. E-Trips, could you ease up for a moment?" Armin requested. Eren grunted but stopped glaring at the blond female.

"Krista, Armin, what's going on?" Mikasa asked bluntly. "Why is he acting like Hange just tried to retest if he's a Titan?"

Eren's heads broke unison at that, Eins glaring at Mikasa while Drei gave a squawk of embarrassment while looking away. Zwei made his face neutral, refusing to acknowledge that.

"… Okay, there's no way to say this delicately," Krista accepted with a sigh. "Mikasa? I can understand what Eren is saying."

Mikasa didn't react for a moment at that, the only sound being the breeze and the rather loud breathing of a three headed reptile. Her gaze went over to Armin, who just nodded reassuringly. She glanced up at Eren's heads, who all nodded with varying levels of enthusiasm.

Krista saw several emotions flash across Mikasa's face; A barest of smiles, a softening in the eyes, a flash of suspicion, a twitch off annoyance, and who knew what else. Finally, she took a breath and calmly stated. "Armin, I'll be taking my next shift with Krista."

Everyone was surprised as Mikasa turned to leave, and Drei let out a strange, throaty sound.

"Is he…?" Armin asked idly.

"He's laughing, yes," Krista confirmed. '"Why did she leave…?"

[[Because if she stays, it'll be too obvious; Her having a conversation with us.]]

Krista glanced back up at the giant. "When did you get smarter?"

[[[[We didn't.]]]]

[[I'm just the brains.]]

[And not much else.]

"Is it stranger than it looks?" Armin asked as the heads started to squabble amongst each other.

"They all have the same voice, so, yes," Krista answered.

Armin nodded, moving a bit closer to Krista while Eren was distracted. "Think you can help those two along as well?"

Krista started before looking to Armin in surprise. Did he know one of Eren's heads was playing matchmaker? Still, she smiled a bit. "I'll see what I can do."

[[[[What are you two whispering about?]]]]

Both of them looked up at the three heads looking down at them with equally suspicious looks. In unison, Krista and Armin smiled

innocently and answered. "Nothing."

[Liars.]

[[Definitely.]]

[[[Neither of you are good at this.]]]

Meanwhile

Levi didn't have to wonder long.

"Okay, I call bullshit."

Erwin remained stoic at Levi's response to the news Hange brought. "Trust me, I'm skeptical as well," Hange said with a frown.

"It is rather unlikely that Cadet Lenz would be so close to the Shifter and able to understand Trips, while having no knowledge about the true nature of either," Pixis agreed.

"Unless our theory is true, that this is a side effect of her coming in contact with the tongue," Hange mused.

"That seems rather unlikely, but we can't rule it out without testing it," Erwin stated. "Regardless, Krista's value just grew. We can finally have detailed conversations with Eren and possibly find out more about his nature."

"Well, I suppose it's my turn," Levi said with a sigh.

"Yes, you both said you had urgent information for us," Pixis noted absently. "I don't think you can top that one though, Captain."

"We have some sneaky bastard squatting outside the wall," Levi offered bluntly. "Is that exciting enough, Commander?"

"Wait, you saw something?" Hange asked with interest, turning her full attention to him now.

"More what I didn't see," Levi countered. "But something cleared out the Titans last night."

"Cleared them out?" Erwin repeated. "Are you sure they died?"

That uncomfortable idea entered the air now: The Founding Titan, the power to control Titans.

"There were more than a few imprints where they fell, and lots of damage that looks fresh when you get down there," Levi explained. "And I found a footprint. Or, clawprint, I suppose. It's big too, Titan-sized."

"Oh?" Pixis asked as Hange buzzed with excitement. "Do you think it could be from another thing like our big friend?"

"I don't think so. Whatever it was, its prints each had three long digits, claws by the look of it," Levi explained.

Hange paused in thought. "Trips has four claws, and they're not that long, compared to his feet anyway."

"Right," Levi agreed with a nod. "But while we were looking around, my squad and I were all sure something was watching us."

Pixis and Erwin shared a look at that. "I trust my solders' instincts on this," Erwin stated firmly.

"So, it might still be out there," Hange murmured thoughtfully.

"It?" Levi asked pointedly.

Erwin raised a brow as Hange stiffened. "You didn't tell him?"

"I was in a hurry, and forgot he wasn't there when Mikasa told us," Hange explained with a sigh.

"Just give me the short version," Levi said flatly.

"Trips sensed something on the other side of the boulder last night," Erwin answered. "And according to Cadet Ackerman, they both heard something speak, saying Trip's true name."

Levi's eye widened minutely. "So, if this is the same thing, it can talk?" Levi summarized, getting a nod. "And it knows the Golden Brat, even though he supposedly doesn't know anything how he turned into a a three headed freak of nature?"

"It is strange yes, but it would appear that, just as the Shifter is not the only one, there may be more giant creatures," Erwin stated, humming for a second. "And no friend to regular titans, it would seem…"

Levi grunted. "Any more surprises?"

"Now that you mention it, yes," Pixis stated with a neutral look. "There was a reason I asked Commander Erwin to meet with me. One of those sent to judge the Shifter and Trips has arrived."

"Oh?" Hange asked curiously as Erwin raised an eyebrow.

"Yes, a "representative" of the nobles in this matter," Pixis stated with expertly hidden distaste. "They arrived ahead of the rest, and requested to meet with us."

"I'm guessing that request wasn't a request," Levi remarked bluntly.

As if to make his point, a knock on the door drew their attention.

"It's Anka, Sir. The representative has arrived. Shall I let her in?" Anka's voice came through the door.

"Thank you, Anka, you may," Pixis called back as the Scouts turned to the door with wary curiosity. It was no secret the nobles weren't fans of their regiment.

The door was opened, and the first thing Levi noticed was the walking stick… an old timer or a cripple. Judging by the lack of

wrinkles on the hand, it was the latter. The rest was covered in a heavy white robe, save for the face.

She smiled at them with bright, tired blue eyes. "Sorry for my attire. I thought a storm was brewing," she said in a friendly tone. "I'm the head of the Reiss Family, but please, call me Frieda."

End of Chapter

And this is how cannon dies. The lull is ending, and everything is starting to pick up. You all thought the big mystery was going to be what is hiding out there, but nope, Frieda is still alive people!

But yeah, Krista now looks suspicious again, Eren is having some heart to hearts. Also, he's playing matchmaker with Armin and Annie while Armin is playing matchmaker with Eren and Mikasa, and both are getting Krista to help them. THis won't turn into a romcon, but that's still funny.

Early viewing of chapters 15-16 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 15

God of Hate

"Lady Frieda. It's a pleasure to have you here," Pixis regarded good-naturedly, as he always did in the presence of nobility.

"The pleasure is mine, Commander Pixis," Frieda answered, her walking stick tapping as she walked to the nearest couch. "I hope you don't mind if I sit. Old riding injury, never gives me a day's rest."

"Sorry to hear that," Levi said neutrally.

She glanced at him and hummed. "You must be the famous Captain Levi, Humanity's Strongest. I know several nobles that tried to buy you into being personal guards for them. I believe you told them, and I quote, *I'll take my chances with the gluttonous fucks I know.* "

Hange tried not to smile at that, not even a bit.

"I recall saying something like that," Levi admitted, knowing it would do no good to deny it. If she didn't like the scouts, kissing her ass wouldn't help any.

Frieda just chuckled. "I'll send them your regards," she said before turning to the room as a whole. "So, let me make sure I've gotten none of the facts misplaced so far. We have two unknown entities. One is a human that can turn into a Titan at will, and the other *was* a human that is stuck as a giant creature that is, supposedly, not a Titan."

"We've designated them as "The Shifter" and "Trips" for now, Lady Frieda," Pixis informed, looking to Erwin and Hange. "The Scouts have been instrumental in our attempts to understand the existence of both creatures."

"Right, and this… Trips? He saved the city and killed the Titans, but was attacked by this Shifter," Frieda summarized, getting nods. She glanced to the scouts with a hum. "I should wait to hear more when the others arrive, but I did come early with a request."

"And what might that be?" Erwin asked with a raised eyebrow.

"I'd like to meet this creature… this Trips."

Silence came over the room.

Hange glanced to the commanders, but they were giving the noblewoman curious looks. "That… can be arranged, if you so desire," Hange answered. "May we ask why though?"

"How else are we meant to judge this creature, that you claim is intelligent and understands humans, that means us no harm, if we don't look upon it with our own eyes?" Frieda inquired ruefully. "Besides, there shouldn't be a problem, should there?"

"We will need some time," Erwin answered calmly. "Last we heard, Trips was taking a nap."

Frieda tilted her head. "Forgive my ignorance, but Titans don't sleep in the conventional sense, do they?"

"No, Ma'am," Hange confirmed. "Titans become inactive when kept out of daylight for prolonged periods, but we've never witnessed them truly fall into a slumber, let alone in daylight."

"Trips has been active at night. He's rather restless with nothing to do most of the time," Pixis explained.

"I can only imagine. If what you say is true, the city must feel very small after a while," Frieda mused. "Take all the time you need. My leg could use a rest."

Meanwhile

As far as Krista was concerned, this was the definition of awkwardness.

Her shift with Mikasa had started, and… nobody had said anything.

Both Eren and Mikasa both just stood there; herself and Mikasa on a rooftop, staring at the three heads. All three sets of eyes watched them as well.

It was bad enough that she had to be here for this private moment as a translator, but the tension was insanely thick now.

How did Armin put up with these two?

Ultimately, she sighed and decided to break the ice herself. "So, Mikasa, you glad that he kept his eyes?"

[[[[Huh?]]]]

Mikasa smiled with a nod. "Yes. I don't think it would have been as easy to believe otherwise," Mikasa said fondly as she stared up. "I did think they reminded me of you, but I thought, well…"

[[There was no way I turned into an armless lizard.]]

[With three damn heads!]

"It seemed impossible he was this… thing," Krista answered delicately, looking to Eren. "Seriously, what do I call, whatever you are? You're not a Titan."

[Do you think I know?]

[[Just say lizard or… whatever Armin was calling us before.]]

[[[A dragon?]]]

[[[[Yeah, a dragon.]]]]

"I have no idea what a drag-gun even is," Krista retorted.

Mikasa frowned before turning back to Eren. "Are you feeling well, after what happened?"

Eins growled in his throat while nodding to Drei on the opposite end, Zwei craning over to look pointedly at the regrown horn, causing Drei to nip at the air in annoyed embarrassment.

"He says it's all better. It even looks like the old one," Krista translated, happy to have this conversation moving.

"No, it's still shorter than it used to be, and it's smoother right now," Mikasa mused observantly.

All three heads looked at her, shocked and confused as they grunted a question.

"How do you already have the horns memorized?" Krista asked on Eren's behalf and her own.

Mikasa shrugged. "I had little better to do. I keep finding little things different with each head," Mikasa mused, looking to Eins. "Like that one has a shorter snout, with more curved horns."

[I do?]

Zwei looked between each head intently, studying the protrusions on both.

[[Huh. She's actually right.]]

[[[Wonder if Hange has noticed that?]]]

"Wow, Mikasa, that's…" Krista stopped, not sure what to say to that exactly. "Impressive? I mean, I've been more focused on how each one sounds."

Mikasa nodded. "I've been wondering that," she said, glancing at Drei. "That's the one that gave me back the scarf."

Drei gave an awkward, toothy smile that would have terrified most people.

"Thank you, Eren," Mikasa said with a smile, fiddling with the red cloth idly.

[[[[You're welcome. I'm just sorry I took so long to let you know I was alive.]]]]

"He's sorry it took so long," Krista explained with a small smile.

"It's not your fault," Mikasa assured. "You couldn't exactly speak. And you were busy saving Trost," she mused absently. "It must have been hard, waking up like this."

[[… It really wasn't.]]

[It felt good, honestly.]

[[[Don't tell her that, Krista.]]]

Krista looked at him curiously before schooling her expression. "He caught on pretty quick," she supplied. She didn't exactly want to lie to her, but… Mikasa didn't need to start doubting that Eren even wanted to turn human again.

"I saw," Mikasa said with a frown. "Have you been okay with that madwoman poking and prodding at you?"

[[[Yes.]]]

[No!]

[[Mostly.]]

"He… has conflicting feelings, I think," Krista summarized with a raised eyebrow. "You mean, Section Commander Hange, right?"

"I'm not surprised you know her, given the circumstances," Mikasa said neutrally.

"I'm more acquainted with Captain Levi," Krista answered.

[The Runt.]

Krista chose to ignore that muttering from Eins. "He's been… helpful but blunt with his honesty. Since, you know, it's his job to… deal with the Shifter, if she becomes a problem," she said solemnly.

Mikasa's eyes softened. She couldn't imagine having to sit down and talk politely with someone whose job it was to kill Eren at the slightest mistake on his part.

"So, what did Hange do that… upset you so much, Mikasa?" Krista asked curiously.

[[She checked to see if we had an asshole.]]

Krista blinked hard. "I didn't need that image in my head," she said with wide eyes.

"She's also been rather eager to rip a piece of him off," Mikasa mused.

[[[It was one scale, Mikasa.]]]

"He has a point, I think," Krista commented. "I mean, he can regenerate right."

"You know he can, Krista, you saw it too, when he was pushing the boulder," Mikasa reminded, scowling up at the three heads. "Did you even know you could heal like that, from being injured that much?"

[[[[I knew how to run and bite. Everything else, I figured out as I went.]]]]

"That's a no," Krista answered, eyes looking between the soldier and the reptile.

Mikasa sighed. "It really is you. Reckless as ever," she said with a head shake.

She froze as she felt hot air blow over her. She raised her gaze to see Drei's snout just out of arm's reach, staring at her soulfully, apologetically.

Mikasa smiled as she reached out and ran a hand on the snout. "I know I said it before, but… I'm so happy you're here, Eren," she whispered with shimmering dark eyes.

Drei nuzzled against her, lightly, gently, prompting a chuckle from the strongest of the 104th. Mikasa glanced up at the other two heads. The middle one glanced away, feigning disinterest while the other grunted and turned his head away.

Still Eren indeed.

Krista smiled at the scene playing out before her. She wondered if she'd have some weirdly touching moment with Ymir in her Titan form one day.

It was bizzare thoughts like this that made her truly wonder what had become of the world recently.

Eventually, the two parted, and all three heads turned to Krista with varying degrees of gratitude.

[[[[Thanks, Historia.]]]]

"No problem," Krista said before blinking with an uncertain face.

"Is something a matter?" Mikasa asked with a frown.

"No, just thinking. Isn't it about time for the next group to show up though?" Krista asked curiously.

Mikasa scowled, not wanting to end this here, but a quick look at the sun told her that the blond had a point. "Connie and Sasha should be here soon."

"…" Krista raised an eyebrow. "Do they know that?"

Mikasa paused. She had made this change in teams at a rather last moment, so who knew. "I'll go check," Mikasa said with resignment

[[[[See you soon, Mikasa.]]]]

Mikasa smiled over her shoulder. "You too, Eren."

With that, she took off, gas shooting from her ODM gear.

Krista would have commented how sweet it was that Mikasa knew what Eren said without needing it translated, but she couldn't help frowning as she looked up at Eren. "How did you know that?"

[[[[Eh?]]]]

All three heads looked down at the small human in surprise.

[What are you on about?]

[[Know what?]]

[[[Be more specific?]]]

Krista sighed, leaning closer and trying to keep her voice down but audible. "You just called me Historia."

All the heads tilted and glanced at each other in confusion.

[[[[Yes, and?]]]]

"I go by Krista, remember?" she reminded.

[[[[Yeah, but it's not like anyone can hear me.]]]]

"No, Eren," Krista groaned, looking at him pointedly. "How do you ***know*** that name though?"

[[[[You told me!]]]]

"I did?" Krista said in bewilderment. "When did that happen?"

[[[[When we…]]]]]

All three heads suddenly froze with what could only be bewilderment on their scaly visages.

[The hell…?]

[[[But, I don't…]]]

[[Huh…]]

Krista gave him a very, very worried look. "Is… everything alright?"

The three heads frown as one, as Eren absently muttered four words to himself.

[[[[What am I remembering…?]]]]

Meanwhile

"Oi, brat, listen up."

"You don't have to shout, shrimp. You could hear a turd dropping in this place," Ymir pointed out, whipping her face of some crumbs, and placing her bowl on the stand.

"You're disgusting," Levi said flatly. "Now take this seriously. The first of your judges arrived early."

"Okay?" Ymir asked with a raised eyebrow. "I can't exactly make myself anymore presentable if that's your gripe."

"I'm giving you one warning. We're all on standing orders to kill you now if you do the slightest thing suspicious," Levi warned.

Ymir grimaced. "Not surprised. Guess you can't really be sure I'm telling anything real yet. Fine, I'll keep the sass to a minimum whenever I get to meet these people, and won't move too much. That help?"

"It should. Just remember, it might not just be your life on the line," Levi pointed out coldly.

"Walls, do you have to be such a bastard? I get it! I pull shit, Krista is the one in hot waters," Ymir said with a sigh. "So… how does this work? They coming down here to my lovely abodes to pass judgment or what?"

"Haven't the slightest clue," Levi answered.

Ymir frowned. "Just be honest with me. Do you believe me, or at least Krista? At all?"

"Your lovebird? Yeah. I buy that she's just been caught up in your bullshit without knowing it," Levi answered, staring down at her impassively. "You? I don't trust you to clean your own cell."

"Figures," Ymir accepted, relieved nonetheless.

"It doesn't have anything to do with you being a Titan," Levi stated, firm yet honest. "It's that look in your eye."

Ymir met his look with a scowl.

"You're loyal to that girl and nothing else. You'd snatch her up and run off alone if you thought it was a good idea," Levi elaborated. "You'd abandon every comrade you trained alongside. Right?"

Ymir didn't answer.

'Even if she wanted to stay by their sides, and risk dying," Levi continued.

"Yeah, I'm a selfish bitch," Ymir agreed venomously. "What of it?"

"That's all," Levi answered simply. "I can't trust you."

Ymir paused before nodding. "I didn't expect you to, honestly."

"You just want to make sure I trust Krista," Levi mused. "You can see why I don't buy you jumped on board with us, just like that."

It wasn't a question, and they knew it.

"It'll make sense in time, Captain Shrimp," Ymir answered with a careless wave of her hand. "You want something extra? My daily token of knowledge?"

"Either talk or I don't remind them to feed you later," Levi warned.

"Charming as ever," Ymir grunted. "This isn't helpful, but I'm sure Eyebrows will find it interesting."

Levi waited with calm impatience.

"Humor me for a second. You know how, before the wall came up, the world was filled with people of all kinds of…" Ymir paused to look thoughtful. "I don't even think you understand what "races" mean."

"I'm guessing not the sporting kind," Levi mused.

Ymir snorted in amusement. "No, hardly. It's a word to describe people of different heritages. Not like the noble shits though, I mean like people having different shades of skin and certain looks to their faces. Stuff like that."

"Another stupid way people make to divide themselves, got it," Levi mused. "What's your point?"

"Well, as far as I know, no one in the walls knows what you all called yourselves back then," Ymir explained.

Levi frowned. "I know something about this actually. People in the underground use to try to kidnap people of certain looks, rare ones," he said in thought. "So, wouldn't the people of the Walls be made of a lot of different of these "races?"

Ymir smirked. "Clever bastard. I think you know why it's mostly just one group though."

"The people that made the walls got priority. Both because they made them, and because they were closest," Levi speculated.

"A few generations later, and people of the less numerous races have married into the majority, and mostly bred themselves out in the process," Ymir summarized

"You're right. Interesting, but useless," Levi agreed with a hum. "Might as well as hear it though. What is it?"

Ymir smirked. "You're called Eldians, the people of Eldia."

Meanwhile

Rico frowned and stood on the curve of Trost's walls. The commanders had ordered more troops on the walls, and two of the elite scouts were watching over the entire thing; specifically, two that answered directly to Captain Levi… meaning that they, like her, were a few of those in the know, that the Golden Beast and Titan Shifter were both cadets of the 104th. She wasn't sure why she was trusted with that information, but she also didn't really care to discover the reason. She was more concerned with what she didn't know, two in particular.

One was the death of Captain Kitz Woermann.

He wasn't very inspiring as a leader, she knew. But for all his fearful nature, she respected him enough to follow his lead. And now it fell to her to deliver the news to his wife and child, to tell them why he'd never return home again. If nothing else, she wanted to be able to tell them why. And tell them he had been… brave, for once, in trusting the creature that had saved Trost.

But something about his death didn't make sense? Kitz Woermann had been terrified of dying. To find him sitting peacefully in the chair, bleeding out from a missing leg? No, she knew the man would have tried to stop the bleeding and use his gear to rush back to the safety of Wall Rose or lost consciousness trying. And how had he even gotten so far from the battle?

Maybe she was overthinking it. Maybe she just wanted his death to mean more than just an unlucky chance of fate on that fateful day.

The second, more current mystery on her mind was what had the Scouts so spooked.

Officially, they were doing this because there was going to be a… meeting between "Trips" and some noble sent by the government, to pass judgment on both creatures, Beast and Titan. And that made perfect logical sense. They had to at minimum appear that they, in theory, could deal with Yeager if he turned on them. Having two elites at his only possible escape exit certainly would fit that.

So, why were these elite scouts glancing outside the walls instead of inside them?

It could just be their nature, keeping an eye on the Titans, and wondering if the Colossal or Armored Titans might reappear.

But then, there were no Titans out there. Something she had noted with a troubled look. Most soldiers were too focused on what was happening within the walls, treating the scaly creature like some

great spectacle to distract themselves with. But some, like her, had noticed the strange lack of Titans. Something had to have either lured them away or killed them. And in either case, it had to have happened at night. When Titans were vulnerable and nobody could see what was going on.

And, if she was right, when Yeager had a horn blown off.

Something else was going on, and Rico didn't like it.

There were only two clear possibilities. Either the Armored Titan, or another Shifter entirely, or it was something similar to what Yeager had become. Those were the only things she knew of that could, perhaps, take down many Titans in one night.

If it was a Shifter, that was bad. It meant their enemies were on the move. If it was another creature, that was an unknown. Almost worse in a way than an enemy.

A glint caught her eye, drawing her attention back to Trost. The golden beast was on the move again, heading towards the gate of Wall Rose.

She hoped Yeager made a good first impression.

Meanwhile

"Okay, Eren, remember! Be careful with literally everything you do!" Hange said loudly. "We somehow lucked out and got one of the more pleasant nobles."

Zwei gave her a skeptical glance while Drei nodded, Eins not deigning to acknowledge her. He was currently walking at a steady pace, Hange and Armin moving at a slight run atop the roofs to keep up with him, with Connie and Sasha running behind them. They were headed to the inner gate, where there was supposedly a noble wanting to meet him.

All three of his heads had differing mixed feelings about that prospect.

"Ma'am, no offense, but didn't you say that this was a formality at this point?" Sasha asked with a frown.

"They're not going to try and provoke or kill him," Armin reasoned with a frown. "But the more goodwill we have, the fewer obstacles we'll have in the future when we need… anything approved regarding E-Trips."

"So, we don't want to give them a reason to fuck with us later, right?" Connie summarized.

"That's the long and short!" Hange said with a grin.

"So why is he/she coming?" Sasha and Connie asked, nodding to each other. "Hey!"

"Settle down, you can argue later!" Armin pleaded before glancing up at Eren's massive form.

Even as a human, Eren often didn't make the best first impressions. However, it was almost impossible for him to put his foot in his mouth if he couldn't speak; hence why the commanders were keeping Krista a secret for now. Honestly, it was probably best if most people didn't know what Eren's angry right head was often saying.

So lost in thought, Armin missed a broken shingle, his foot slipping under him as he fell.

The golden giant stopped suddenly, Drei turning with a call of concern towards Armin, the other two heads looking to the blonde patiently.

"Hey, Armin, you okay?" Connie asked, helping his friend up with a hand under his arm.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm fine," Armin assured with a sigh.

"Armin," Hange spoke up. "This woman and the others coming know that he was a human cadet. If we need to convince them that he's more than "not a threat" and actually an ally, we're going to have to rely on you."

"On me?" Armin asked in surprise.

"You know him best after Mikasa. And while she's an excellent soldier, it's obvious to anyone that she's not skilled in words. Not the way we need at least," Hange pointed out. "You, however, were able to convince a captain to take a risk on him even before knowing who Trips really is."

Connie almost snorted as he noticed Eren's heads all nodding in agreement. Mikasa was precise and blunt with her words usually, but swaying over skeptical officials? That was outside her expertise.

"But how could I-" Armin said doubtfully, only to be cut off by a loud grunt from Eren.

The three-headed being was giving him three identical stares. Something like a smirk, as if he had complete confidence and faith in Armin's abilities. The heads all slowly nodded before turning to begin walking again.

"Well, I'd say he believes in you, Armin," Sasha said with a grin, patting him on a back.

"Come on, we keep them waiting anymore, and they might think something went wrong," Hange warned with a good-natured smile.

Meanwhile

Erwin stood in the street of Trost, not far from the gate. He was here with Levi, Pixis, Petra, Eld, Anka, and Gustav as they flanked Frieda. A few other soldiers were watching nearby. It was a delicate balance, looking like they didn't blindly trust "Trips" while not appearing too

cautious of him. Taking Frieda's protection seriously without implying she needed protection from their new ally.

"Are you sure you don't need a seat, Ma'am?" Gustav inquired politely.

Frieda smiled, tapping her walking stick. "Oh, I can manage to be on my feet for a while. The ride here was more of a strain than this."

"If you don't mind me asking, Madam, but why did you ride ahead?" Pixis inquired, offering her a drink from his flask.

Frieda surprised a few of them by taking it and taking a brief swig. "You have good taste, Commander," she praised to Anka's disappointment and Pixis's amusement. "And because I'd rather be in more pain and sore for a few hours than less pain for another whole day."

"Hey," Levi spoke up, nodding down the street. "He's coming."

They saw some figures in the air on ODM gear first, likely Hange and the others… then, the main event.

In hindsight, Erwin realized there was no way to make Eren's approach less intimidating, especially from ground level. A soft rumbling on the earth as three giant heads suddenly emerged from a street, their scaly snouts turning towards them with green eyes locked on them. The large creature walked towards them, the tails mindful of the buildings. Closer and closer Eren drew, and Erwin could see the unease on Anka and Gustav' appearances. They had never been up close like this…

But as the three-headed beast came to a halt, Erwin couldn't help noticing the utter lack of reaction on Frieda's face. She was just… smiling; almost intrigued it appeared while looking up at the Titan-Killer.

The three heads leaned down. Not all the way, not too much to be intimidated by the sets of giant teeth or the breath exhaling from the mouths and noses. Just enough to make it clear they had his attention.

He was doing as well as Erwin could have possibly hoped.

"Lady Frieda!" Hange spoke up as she landed between them and Eren. "May I introduce this beautiful, golden bastard that we affectionately call Trips. Trips, this is Frieda," Hange introduced, waving from one to the other.

All three heads nodded in greeting, keeping their reactions in sync and neutral.

"It's a pleasure, "Trips,"" she said with a chuckle. "You've caused quite the stir in the walls."

That seemed to surprise Eren, his three heads glancing at one another before looking to the Commanders and Hange curiously, Zwei to Erwin, Drei to Hange and Eins to Pixis.

"Oh, I suppose you didn't bother to tell him?" Frieda asked with a chuckle, glancing over her shoulder.

"We've been a bit distracted," Hange answered with a shrug.

"I'm not surprised," Frieda accepted, looking up as the three heads refocused on her. "Everyone is talking of the Golden Beast that slew the Titans and saved Trost. Some fear you, thinking you might be something even more dangerous and terrible than the Titans. But most people in Rose and Senna are treating you like some great miracle from the heavens, a savior to strike down the Titans. It's actually becoming a problem for the Church of the Walls."

Everyone tensed when Eren's left most head did something resembling a snort.

"Yes, that's about how I feel," Frieda pretended to whisper with a conspiratorial smile. "People are desperate for something to believe in. And the Church, being them, is already trying to denounce you as something befouling the walls."

There was the slightest change in Eren's facial expressions.

'But enough about that," Frieda said. "I'll keep this simple, "Trips:" Do you want to help the people of the walls still, in reclaiming Wall Maria?"

The three heads all rose higher as if standing at attention while nodding distinctly. One nod was aggressive and the other was eager, while the middle was measured.

"Good," Frieda said. "But you know, given that you exist at all, there are probably other things out there, more dangerous than Titans. We can barely hold up against the Titans. Do you think you'll be up to the task, of fighting off greater monsters like you?"

Everyone watched Eren intently, cautiously. All at once, he seemed to sneer as one of his tails crept to the front, putting more than a few of them on edge until…

The tail's club in was placed over his chest. Erwin smiled, realizing it was a salute.

A better answer probably didn't exist in Eren's situation.

End of Chapter

Honestly this was mostly Frieda's chapter, making you all wonder what the hell is going on with her. But than, of course, there is the Eren's moment with Krista, or rather, Historia. Good luck guessing what is going on there.

Still, everything is coming together, and trust me, I have something special planned for the trial. XP Until next time!

Early viewing of chapters 16-17 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 16

God of Hate

AN For the record, this opening part is the same scene that the last chapter ended on, but from Eren's point of view.

[[[[She looks like Krista.]]]]

That was the first thought Eren had about this "Frieda" person.

[[What is that?]]

[Hell if I know.]

[[[Maybe she's sick?]]]

The second thought, or thoughts rather, went towards the "glow" about her. Ever since the night he made Mikasa and the others realize who he was, he had taken the time to notice this strange… thing he could see around everyone. It was easier to notice at night, but now that he was aware of it, he could focus on it in daylight too.

Most people just had a "normal" glow about them. Some were brighter or dimmer, but all it did was outlined their bodies, like they were all tiny flames, with the lights muffled behind distorted glass.

Some were unique, however. Mikasa and Captain Levi, he noticed, had a "dark" glow about them. Whereas the normal glows were more distinct at night, he saw theirs more clearly during the day, giving them a cloaked look around them. Might that mean they were related? Might be something to have Krista mention.

Another strange set he noticed were Annie, Bertholdt, and Reiner. They all had an odd inverted feeling to their glow. It was peculiar, as if the light was being pulled inwards, towards themselves, instead radiating outwards. He had no idea what that meant. Could they all

be related? They did say they were all from the same village, so them all being cousins to some extent made sense if the glows indicated a relationship. But why did only some look unique then? Everyone else certainly wasn't all ***that*** closely related, but he hadn't seen any other unique glows besides those two examples.

Until now; Frieda's was a new mystery to the equation. Her aura was… solid? Contained? It was hard to describe. More intense than any other he had seen, thicker in how it looked as it refused to radiate beyond her. As if her glow was restrained, held back somehow.

It was all so hard to process and think about, this extra sense that he had no context for. Did it mean anything at all? Was it just some quirk of this form that he was overanalyzing?

"Lady Frieda!"

Luckily, Hange made it so he didn't have to dwell on that any longer.

"May I introduce this beautiful, golden bastard that we affectionately call Trips. Trips, this is Frieda."

[[[Did she have to save beautiful?]]]

[[Would handsome really make it better?]]

[[[That wasn't my point!]]]

[Both of you, shut up and just nod!]

Luckily, they had all managed to keep their expressions neutral and greeted the noble with nods of the heads.

"It's a pleasure, "Trips." You've caused quite the stir in the walls."

[[[[Huh?]]]]

[[[I'm surprised Hange didn't say anything.]]]

[Baldy! Whose been saying what about us?!]

[[Do we even want to know?]]

"Oh, I suppose you didn't bother to tell him?" Frieda asked with amusement as they all looked to Hange and the commanders.

"We've been a bit distracted," Hange deflected with an awkward grin.

[[[[I've been distracted; you've been all over me… literally.]]]]

"I'm not surprised," Frieda mused as their three heads all looked at her once more. "Everyone is talking about the Golden Beast that slew the Titans and saved Trost."

[[[Well, that's good.]]]

"Some fear you, thinking you might be something even more dangerous and terrible than the Titans."

[Less good.]

[[They're not exactly wrong.]]

[Do you want more cannonballs to the head!?]

"But most people in Rose and Senna are treating you like some great miracle from the heavens, a savior to strike down the Titans."

[[[[In Senna?]]]]

[[That is surprising. I thought they'd be too complacent to care.]]

[[[Probably because we're not a Titan.]]]

[And now we have damn Titan-Shifters to worry about.]

"It's actually becoming a problem for the Church of the Walls."

Drei snorted at that.

[[[Good!]]]

"Yes, that's about how I feel," Frieda said playfully, acting as if she was whispering to him.

[Ha! I like this one!]

"People are desperate for something to believe in. And the Church, being them, is already trying to denounce you as something befouling the walls," Frieda explained.

[Yeah, we're going to get shot again, I know it.]

[[Note to self, watch all cannons from now on.]]

[[[I don't want people worshiping me, but…]]]

[[[[Better me than the walls, I guess.]]]]

"But enough about that," Frieda said with a dismissive wave. "I'll keep this simple, "Trips:" Do you want to help the people of the walls still, in reclaiming Wall Maria."

[[[Of course!]]]

[I'll rip every Titan apart that gets in our way.]

[[Nothing would please me more.]]

"Good," Frieda said with a nod of her own. "But you know, given that you exist at all, there are probably other things out there, more dangerous than Titans."

His mind drifted back to the voice from beyond the wall, a being that knew his name. Oh, he was certain that there were more out there. Not just things stronger than Titans, but intelligent too; Things that

could speak. Much worse than a mindless giant, even an idiot would know that.

"We can barely hold up against the Titans. Do you think you'll be up to the task, of fighting off greater monsters like you?"

He sneered, all three heads snarling just a bit as they did something almost on instinct. In lieu of arms, they used one of their tails to crane around and lay it over his chest in the best imitation of a salute he could muster

[[[[I'll take them all on.]]]]

There was a brief silence.

"Good," Frieda said with a smile. "Then, I'm going to need a favor."

"A favor, Lady Frieda?" Erwin asked curiously, eyes focusing with a calculated look in his eyes.

[[[[Well, they certainly didn't script this meeting.]]]]

Eren watched on curiously, just wondering what this noble would bother to ask of him.

"Don't worry, Commander, it's related to why I'm here," Frieda assured over her shoulder. "As you know, we are here to make a decision not only of you but of the Shifter as well."

All three heads nodded, giving her curious looks, Zwei narrowing his eyes in thought.

"The soldiers here have plans for how to keep her restrained and… docile for the trial," Frieda started.

Eren blinked. They were going to let Ymir outside?

[[That might not be wise.]]

[Are they sure they can trust her not to run off?]

[[[Maybe that's what we're for?]]]

Frieda laughed a bit. "I can see you're a bit confused, so I'll cut to the chase. I was thinking that it would be a good show, for everyone if one of the guards to this trial… was you."

[[[?]]]

[[Hmmm.]]

"Um, Ma'am, may I ask what you mean?" Hange asked curiously.

"I have no doubt that my colleges will eventually come to the same decision as I regard this, how did you say? Beautiful bastard," Frieda answered playfully. "And thereupon, our eyes must turn to the Shifter. Trips has already proved her superior in battle as a Titan. While there are the other precautions you are all taking, it has a good look to it, our giant ally here looming over the shifter like an executioner should she try anything… treacherous," Frieda pointed out.

[[[[Well, they obviously haven't told me something about whatever's going on with Ymir.]]]]

[[I think Ymir is cooperating but they don't trust her.]]

[Can't blame them.]

[[[I'll trust Krista though.]]]

[[[[Agreed.]]]]

"So, how about it, Savior of Trost? You interested in keeping a Titan-Shifter in check for us?" Frieda asked directly.

Eren nodded. There was no other answer.

"Thank you. Now if you'll all pardon me, I need to rest before the rest of the officials arrive," Frieda said, nodding to her leg meaningfully.

"As you wish, My Lady," Pixis said, watching her pass before looking to Trips and giving him a smirk of approval, raising his flask briefly in praise before taking a drink.

[[[[Its amazing that his liver is intact.]]]]

Meanwhile

"That went over rather well," Mikasa said idly from a rooftop as the noblewoman left.

"Yeah, it did," Armin said with a scowl as he saw and felt Eren turning around, every step shaking the ground a bit as he began to walk off to another part of Trost.

"Wait up, Trips!" Sasha exclaimed as she took off on her ODM gear.

"It's our turn to lizard-sit you!" Connie called out with a laugh as he followed after.

One of them hissed at him for the joke but ignored them otherwise.

"Something wrong?" Mikasa asked with a furrowed brow to Armin.

"I think that went a bit too well," he answered honestly. "The government is very against changes. But she seemed perfectly agreeable, standing in front of Eren like that and talking to him."

"You think she's lying? That this is a trap?" Mikasa asked, stepping closer.

"No. Maybe, but-" Armin chewed his cheek for a moment in thought. "Did that seem like someone seeing something like Eren for the first time?"

Mikasa stopped and frowned as she looked to the gate. "Maybe she's just good at keeping her cool? The commanders never seemed that shocked."

"Yeah, but they've seen and fought Titans for years," Armin reasoned. "They're used to the feeling of facing down something that outmatches them in almost every way. This is a crippled noble from the interior."

Mikasa turned to Armin once more and conceded his point. "What do we do then?"

"I'm not sure there is anything we can or even should do," Armin answered. "She does appear to be on our side for now, but if so…"

"But if so?" Mikasa repeated.

"I think she knows more about what's going on than the rest of us," Armin answered in concern. "The problem is that this might all just be for show. We might not know what's going on, but the Commanders might and just aren't saying anything."

"Well, then they haven't told me either."

"S-section Commander!" Armin greeted with a nervous salute, Mikasa following suit as the woman approached them.

"Which is strange if true, Erwin gives me some warning of his crazy plans, usually," Hange continued in amusement. "At ease you two. And I agree, something was strange about that."

"You do, Ma'am?" Armin asked in surprise.

"Armin, I know I'm a bit different from the rest, but "NO ONE" has no reaction at all to seeing and talking to something like Trips for the first time," Hange said with a sigh. "Which implies it isn't her first time meeting a giant creature like him."

Mikasa and Armin shared a look. That had strange, possibly dangerous implications to it.

"But there isn't anything to do about it just yet," Hange said with a sigh. "I'm just going to have to let this play out a bit more and see what's going on."

Mikasa frowned while Armin nodded. "Ma'am? I've been meaning to ask…?"

"Hmm?" Hange looked to Armin with a raised eyebrow.

"Should I still put Krista into the rotation, for the groups taking shifts keeping an eye on him?" Armin inquired uncertainly.

"Oh, no, not yet," Hange answered. "The… trial, I suppose, will be going on soon, and we're going to need Krista for some… things regarding that," Hange answered vaguely.

Neither pressed her for details. It wasn't their place to ask and they'd probably know in time. Still, Mikasa was notably disappointed that more talks with Eren were delayed.

Meanwhile

"Are you sure the others will be willing to be so close to Trips?" Erwin asked respectfully as they passed through the gate.

"They'll have to," Frieda said with a smirk. "Imagine what it would sound like if a crippled woman was braver than them?"

Pixis chuckled. "Clever. They either go along with it or look like cowards for their caution."

"Still, is there a reason you wanted him there for this trial?" Erwin asked with a frown.

Frieda sighed deeply, walking over to the edge of the wall with a grimace.

"Ma'am, are you okay?" Anka asked in concern as she stepped forward.

"I'm fine, I just need a moment," Frieda answered. "As for why, our main concern is her escaping, right?"

"Among other things, yes," Erwin admitted.

"Well, by what I read of the battle, he can handle her Titan form easy enough if they fight. So it just seemed safer to put him immediately next to her. If she tries to escape, he might be able to grab her fast enough. If not, well, that's where your best come in, Commanders," Frieda explained.

Erwin raised his massive brows while glancing at his bald counterpart, who was stroking his chin. "It's not a bad plan."

"I know, surprising from a noble, eh?" Frieda asked with a smirk.

"I wouldn't know what you mean, Ma'am. I have only the utmost respect for the nobility," Pixis assured with a good-natured smile.

"Yes, there's a lord whose name I forget, always talking about how he beats the southern commander in chess all the time," Frieda remarked. "He seemed less fond of the game recently."

Pixis smiled just a bit wider at that but said nothing else.

"In either case, if you both believe it's a horrid idea to try, feel free to say so," Frieda said freely.

"You're very open and humble for a noblewoman, Ma'am. I will admit, it's refreshing," Erwin said with a small smile.

"I can see when someone is fishing, Commander," Frieda said with disapproval. "What do you want to ask?"

"Why were you chosen, if I might ask?" Erwin asked curiously.

"Because not many nobles are overly willing to leave their comfy homes to step near a Lizard-Titan, as some call him," Frieda answered with a shrug. "I'm fine now."

With that, they continued walking on, the party giving the noblewoman interesting looks.

As were others.

"Annie, does Frieda Reiss ring any bells?" Reiner asked quietly as they stood on top of the wall, watching the group heading away from the gate.

Annie's eyes grew distant for a moment as she recalled all her time sneaking off to the interior, trying to find information on who the real King of the Walls might be. "Riess was one of the names we didn't have a chance to investigate," Annie answered with a scowl.

"That means it could be her, or her family at least?" Bertholdt theorized uneasily, praying to Helios that this "noblewoman" didn't just happen to look up and stare at them.

"She'd have to commit really hard to keep herself from healing for so long," Reiner mused. "Assuming she's not just faking it of course."

"She knows something though," Annie muttered. "But if she is related to the Coordinates, is she here because of Eren or Ymir…?"

"Wouldn't it be both either way?" Bertholdt asked in confusion.

"I mean if she's here to deal with Ymir or does she know what is really going on with Eren?" Annie rephrased. "If she's not the Founder, we can still get information out of her."

"She's a noble and despite being a cripple, she's beautiful," Reiner commented. "If she goes missing in an area filled with soldiers, in the middle of the night, people would assume some angry asshole stole her away."

"That's sick, but you're not wrong. That would be the simple thing to assume," Annie muttered. "If she is the Founder, she's what we're after. If she's not, we'll get information."

"If she doesn't have that, though, we'll still have to kill her," Reiner reminded grimly.

"We'll have to figure out what to do tonight. It's going to be my last chance to snoop around and try to find where they hide Ymir," Annie remarked before stiffening at the familiar sound of ODM wires and gas. "Someone's coming."

"There you are- and you're the wrong brats," Levi remarked with a sigh as he landed on top of the wall.

"Captain Levi," they greeted with a salute.

"At ease. Have either of you seen a smaller, blonde cadet?" Levi asked

'Armin Arlert?" Annie guessed.

"No, the other one," Levi answered dismissively.

"We haven't seen Krista, Sir," Reiner answered respectfully. "But I was told she was brought into the group?"

"Far as I know," Levi answered idly. "But Hange wants to talk with her too. Something about her testimony on what the big bastard's tongue felt like."

"… Sir, that sounds rather…" Bertholdt started to point out but trailed off meaningfully.

"Trust me, it sounds worse when Hange says it," Levi remarked before scowling. "What are you three doing up here?"

"We were watching… whatever that was, Sir," Annie answered. "Just trying to figure out what's going on."

"Welcome to the fucking club," Levi said dryly.

Meanwhile

Ymir was surprised when she heard her cell door opening.

She was more surprised to see an angry Krista rushing inside.

"Krista?" Ymir said in confusion as the blond walked over to her and grabbed her by the shirt. "… Huh, I've had dreams like this; you angry, me in chains."

"Shut up, Ymir!" Krista yelled, slamming Ymir against the wall. Well, more like shoved her.

Still, Ymir didn't resist, letting her arms hand to the side in chains and just looking down at Krista with a concerned look. "Krista, what's going on? Why are you-?"

Krista shoved her against the wall again. "Shut. Up."

Ymir heeded the order.

"Do you know anything about Eren?" Krista asked pointedly.

Ymir raised an eyebrow.

"Ymir!" Krista snapped with gritted teeth.

"Well, can I talk now?" Ymir asked in annoyance.

"Dammit, just answer me! Did you know anything, anything at all!?" Krista demanded.

"No! I can honestly say, on that front, I have held nothing back. I thought he was the Beast Titan, I doubt it now, but I have no idea what he might be or how he turned into it!" Ymir answered earnestly, staying into Krista's frustrated eyes.

Krista grunted as she pushed herself off of Ymir, making a loud noise of frustration as she ran her hands through her hair.

"Hey. Hey! Krista, come on, talk to me," Ymir called out.

"Oh, that is **rich** coming from you!" Krista shot back with a bitter laugh.

Ymir scowled. "Okay, I deserve that, but come on Krista! What's going on? Cause, I'll admit, you look good pissed off, but I'd like to know why at least."

"No. No, you don't get to sweet talk me right now," Krista said angrily. "Walls, dammit it all, I am tired of this."

"Tired of what!?" Ymir asked, growing frustrated herself.

"The fact that my entire life seems to be one lie or secret after another!" Krista yelled, taking a deep breath.

"… What did you find out?" Ymir asked gravely.

Krista opened her mouth before snapping her head to Ymir. "What do you know?" Krista asked pointedly. "You said that like you know something I don't."

"Just… suspect. I swear, I have no proof or anything," Ymir explained.

Krista sighed deeply. "Can I tell her, or are you going to haul me out of here?" Krista called loudly.

Ymir blinked and looked to the door, finding they were indeed not alone.

"You may tell her," Erwin answered stoically.

Hange, leaning against the bars, smirking at Ymir's surprised look, "What, did you think Krista somehow stole the keys on her own, just

to yell at you?"

"She looked mad enough to try it," Ymir remarked honestly.

Krista sighed deeply. "I can understand Trips."

"… I'm sorry, repeat that?" Ymir requested in bewilderment. "Understand him, like…?"

"Look, everyone else just hears growls and grunts, but I can hear his voice, plain as day," Krista answered in mental exhaustion. "I assumed everyone could at the time."

"What, you didn't think it was weird we couldn't hear him yelling anything back when we were fighting the Titans?" Ymir asked incredulously.

"I just guessed he figured out how to talk while I was unconscious!" Krista answered in exasperation. "So, you know nothing at all?"

"No! That… really doesn't make sense to me," Ymir answered with a frown. "Some of the Shifters can speak in Titan form, I can even do it a little bit, but… this is something else. I've never heard of something where only one or a few people understood a Titan while everyone else didn't. The Nine can't even understand each other like that.

"You can see why we thought it was a bit strange though," Erwin remarked calmly. "She knows you, has a mysterious past, and just happens to be the only one that can understand him."

Ymir frowned, looking at Krista's rigid frame and emotionally spent expression. "Krista, I'm sorry things have been going shit for you. And I admit I'm part of that. But there's nothing I have on this one, I swear. "

"Then how does-!" Krista bit her tongue in anger as she stopped herself, taking a deep breath. "I'm just… so tired of this. It's like I have secrets I don't even know about."

She didn't see Ymir frown at that, but Erwin did.

"If it makes you feel any better? I meant it, you make pissed look good," Ymir offered bluntly.

It was a testament to Krista's state of mind that she just exhaled, unable to return the remark in any way. "I need some time to myself."

Ymir opened her mouth but slowly closed it as Krista left the cell, Hange going with her, but the commander remained.

"Eyebrows," Ymir greeted in a defeated tone. "I'm guessing some of Shrimpy's dogs are out there too?"

"Just as a precaution," Erwin said before stepping into the cell.

Ymir tensed, watching the man warily as he stood a foot away from her bed, well away from where she could reach. "Something you want to talk about, or you just like staring at young cadets?" she asked flatly.

Erwin didn't even acknowledge the insult. "I don't suppose there is anything else you want to share, your trial being so soon?"

Ymir scowled. He must have noticed something, she realized. "Your food here tastes like actual horseshit," she commented, getting only a long, unyielding stare that prompted her to groan. "Fine. Is there something you want to ask or fish for?"

"Why are you here?"

Ymir blinked.

"You claim not to be with those that attacked us. But you're obviously not trying to oppose them," Erwin reasoned. "So why did you come here?"

Ymir remained silent for a moment before looking away. "There's nothing for me out there anymore."

"Anymore," Erwin pinpointed. "Meaning there once was."

"Let's just say the others of the Nine have reason to not be fond of me, okay?" Ymir tried to evade with a sigh.

"Ymir," Erwin said firmly. "I can tell you are between difficult positions. I won't claim to understand, you refuse to share enough for me to try and sympathize with your point of view," Erwin said factually. "But you claim to be willing to cooperate. If that is true, we need to understand your motives. Again, why did you come here?"

Ymir took a deep breath. "… You remember how I mentioned that the power of each of the Nine passes on to another?" Ymir asked rhetorically. "I'm sure you're wondering just how that works."

Erwin said nothing, letting her continue.

"There are two ways to do that. First is simple. If one of them dies, then a random one gets that Titan power," Ymir explained.

"… So even if we kill you, another will just inherit it," Erwin remarked.

"Yeah, I know I'm probably giving you the incentive to lock me up in a hole one day for the rest of my life," Ymir answered flatly. "Next up is method number two. If a normal Titan happens to kill and eat one of the Nine's human forms."

Erwin scowled but didn't look surprised.

"Did you somehow figure that out already…?" Ymir asked suspiciously.

"Not exactly, but I suspected it was involved, given the habits of normal Titans," Erwin remarked. "So, you happened to eat the previous Jaw titan."

"Yeah. He was with the other three," Ymir answered meaningfully. This time, she was rewarded with a furrowing of Erwin's large brows. "Yeah. Those three probably don't have any good plans for me."

"Why hide here then?" Erwin questioned.

"Hey, I had no idea what they were doing at the time. I was just enjoying the fact that I was… ," Ymir trailed off with a sigh. "Didn't know what else to do but just live here as long as I could. Guess you think that I'm kind of a coward, eh?"

"You took on a superior foe to avenge a comrade; Foolish, reckless perhaps. But I'd be insulting many of my lost subordinates if I called you a coward," Erwin remarked. "The next time you meet him, see if you can't understand him as well."

Ymir didn't need to be told who "he" was, obviously that meant Trips. Still, that was an interesting request. "Implying that I'm not going to rot in a cell for the rest of my life," Ymir remarked with a raised eyebrow.

"That depends half on those sent to judge you, but also on your own behavior," Erwin warned.

"Just keep Krista safe," Ymir said with a frown. "I'm starting to think there was more to her than I thought, and I think you know that might be dangerous."

Erwin nodded sagely.

"… Why did you come in here, exactly? This some kind of power move?" Ymir asked idly.

"If that is what you wish to make of it," Erwin stated, turning before giving an unseen smirk of amusement as he left, Petra locking the cell door behind him.

"Cryptic bastard and his damn eyebrows," Ymir muttered to herself, rubbing her head and laying down. That was enough excitement for one day. Or night, or whatever it was.

End of Chapter

And the shit is now rapidly approaching the fan. Eren is gonig to be playing guard to Ymir's trial, and everyone is keenly aware that Frieda took meeting Eren far too well. Everyone suspects something and Krista is finally showing more of her Historia side.

Mainly because she's had a LOT more going on at this point than she did in canon: Near death, Ymir being a titan, trying to help the scouts convince Ymir, constantly worrying Ymir might get executed, finding out that she is the ONLY one that can understnad Eren, etc. Poor girl is stressed and tired of being in the dark.

Hope you all enjoyed this.

Early viewing of chapters 17-18 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 17

God of Hate

Annie was very happy to have her skills at keeping her face a mask of cool apathy.

Because she was honestly scared out of her mind right now.

Armin wanted to take the night shift with her, tonight. The last chance she'd have to gather any intel. For no reason at all, he claimed. Did he know or suspect something? Did the commanders?

More importantly, did Eren?

She could feel those green eyes staring at her in the night. He didn't do that, he never did that before. Most nights she was on watch, Eren was asleep. If he wasn't, he was still staying in the same area, so they didn't have to fumble around in the dark keeping up with him. He might glance at her; he even tried talking to her once. But he didn't stare at her, let alone this intently.

Only one set of eyes was doing it though. Did he think he was being subtle, that it was any less obvious or unsettling to have two giant green eyes peering into her from the darkness instead of six? Because it wasn't.

"Sorry."

Annie didn't flinch, but she did frown at Armin's apology. "For what?"

Armin smiled half-heartedly as they both sat on the edge of a roof. "After last time, I thought it might be a good idea for us all to get used to teaming up with one another, instead of just sticking to the same teams all the time."

Annie thought about it for a moment before responding. "You make it sound like this will be a normal thing for all of us from now on."

Armin shrugged. "Ideally. The alternative is that they try to isolate us from Trips," he mused pessimistically, using the codename out of habbit at this point.

That made sense, she decided. This could all be a coincidence, but… "You don't think the last few years of training were enough time for us to get used to each other?"

Armin nodded to her point. "Most of us. Mikasa…"

Ahh, now that made a lot of sense. "The only ones she'd want to be paired with are you, or the one we're guarding," she said, almost as a joke.

Armin chuckled at that, just a bit. "So… how's Bertholdt adjusting?" Armin asked curiously.

"To the idea that "Trips" is Eren?" Annie asked rhetorically. "About as well as the rest of us did. Trying not to piss himself while talking to something with that many teeth."

"Most of the others are more focused on which head to look at," Armin returned with amusement.

Annie hummed in acknowledgment. "What about Krista? Is she handling this alright?"

Armin tried to cover up the almost-grimace with a smile but Annie caught it. "Pretty good, actually. She wasn't too surprised, really. In the sense that, well, he still behaves a lot like himself when you think about it."

Annie could understand that but pressed to her real question. "That wasn't what I meant," she stated, getting an odd look from Annie. "I mean, how's she handling the situation with Ymir?"

Dead silence came over them for a second and Annie wondered if she overdid something or gave something away. But Armin sighed and massaged his temple, allowing her to internally relax.

"I don't know, to be honest. She's stressed, but they're keeping us in the dark about that side of things," Armin remarked.

"You think they shouldn't?" Annie asked with a raised brow.

"No. To them, it's necessary. Despite everything, there is still a chance that Eren and Ymir already knew about each other. From their point of view, I mean. So keeping them and all parties involved separate is a precaution on their part," Armin mused thoughtfully. "I'm more worried about how Krista will be if things don't… work out for Ymir."

Annie tilted her head. "You don't think they will?"

"I don't know enough to guess," Armin admitted. "I'm not too worried about the military and him-" he said, nodding to Eren's form in the darkness. "But they'll be inclined to kill and dissect Ymir at the slightest reason. Even if it means giving up whatever we could learn from her."

And there was a very, very good chance of that. They both knew that, if for entirely different reasons.

Armin set out a breath as he leaned back on the roof. "I'm just happy we can have peaceful nights like this."

"Peaceful, eh?" Annie murmured as they both stared up at the stars.

Of course, someone else was staring, but not at the stars.

[[Are you happy now?]]

[[[It's a start.]]]

[Why are you like this?!]

[[[Hey, I just want to see Armin happy!]]]

[[Why Annie though?]]

[[[Hey, I don't control who he has a crush on.]]]

[You can control sticking our nose in it!]

[[Hush, they're talking.]]

[Fine.]

[[[Thank you.]]]

"You think the stars look the same, in other places beyond the wall?" Armin asked wistfully.

"I don't know," Annie answered honestly, having never really paid them much attention. "You think there's a place where it never snows?"

"Huh?" Armin looked at her curiously.

"It doesn't snow as much in the south. You think there's someplace so far south that it never snows?" Annie repeated idly.

"Oh. Yeah, I read about someplace like that. Deserts, I think," Armin remarked.

Annie paused, knowing Armin probably shouldn't talk about that so openly. "You called him a dragon, right?"

"Yeah. Some old storybook my grandfather had," Armin mused. "It had an old drawing in it, of a big lizard with wings that breathed fire."

Annie raised an eyebrow. "I don't see any wings, or fire."

"That's probably for the best, the fires I mean," Armin said with a sheepish smile. "And yeah, it's not exactly like in the book, but it still

looks about right, the heads and necks at least."

Annie nodded absently. "So, what, there were things like him around before the Titans?"

Armin gained an uncertain look at that. "I didn't think so. I thought it was just a story, a tale for kids to enjoy. But who knows, it might have been a story, but maybe dragons are real."

They aren't, Annie thought to herself. Or if they were, they weren't out in the open.

"I wonder how many more peaceful nights we'll have," Annie muttered absentmindedly.

"We can only hope for a lot of them," Armin answered softly. After all, it was set in stone that any peace would end, but they could at least make the time they have last.

[[[[Well… at least they're having a nice time, I guess.]]]]

Next Day

"Commanders, allow me to introduce my comrades," Frieda said as they gathered in the office.

Pixis, Erwin, and Hange were all standing in front of a desk. In front of them sat those sent to judge the Shifter and the Beast.

"This is Pastor Nick, representing the Church of the Walls," Frieda waved to the one across from her, a priest made obvious by his robes and the bands along the neck with the symbols of the Walls.

As was often the case, the holy man seemed very displeased about the situation.

Hange suppressed a scowl. They had no friends with the church and it was troubling to think the government was giving them any say in

this matter. She was sure if it was up to him, both Eren and Ymir would be put to death.

"This is Djel Sannes, one of the officials in charge of keeping track of the southern region's finances and expenses," Frieda said, waving to the plain-clothed man with deep, dark circles around his eyes.

Pixis hummed to himself. In a less formal moment, he would have taken a drink from his flask, but abstained from doing so. He did not recognize this man. As the leader of the Southern portion of the garrison, Pixis made it a habit of knowing everyone important to the region by face or name. Djel Sannes was a stranger to him; someone just low on the non-military totem pole, perhaps?

"And to my left is one of the higher-ups of the Military Police, acting as their voice in this: Captain Traute Caven," Frieda said, motioning to the military woman by her side.

Erwin had already taken stock of the blond woman and already came to the conclusion that, if anything, she was here as a bodyguard. For exactly who and against what, it was hard to presume. But the blue-eyed woman had an almost apathetic gaze, as if she could care less about what was going on around her. Perhaps she didn't. Perhaps this was just a job to her. Regardless, he was sure that her sitting next to Frieda was a deliberate choice.

The Scout Commander nodded. "Thank you all for coming. As you know this is a confusing time. I'm sure you're all aware, but I am Erwin Smith, Commander of the Scout Regiment, and this is Commander Pixis of the Garrison. Along with me is Field Commander Hange. She has spent extensive time studying Titans in the past and, more recently, our mysterious new ally."

"Ally?!" Pastor Nick exclaimed with a glare. "That foul creature defiled the walls with-"

"Excuse me," Pixis interrupted swiftly, with a faux-amiable tone. "But he was following our plan, on my authority. If you have a complaint

about the plan, you should direct it to me."

The pastor looked ready to do just that before Frieda raised a hand. "Let's not get ahead of ourselves. There should be an order to this."

The room quieted at that, the preacher reluctantly holding his tongue.

Hange took this as her chance to clear her throat and grab their attention. "I believe we should start with the basics. Has everyone been briefed on the secrets regarding the Shifter and Trips?"

"Humor us," Sannes remarked with the same dead expression and tone. "Let us make sure we are all on the same page."

Hange glanced to the commanders, who nodded. "Very well. As you all should know, both creatures are actually cadets, members of the 104th to be exact. The Shifter's identity is Ymir, no last name, while "Trips" as we've codenamed him, is Eren Yeager."

No one was surprised by this information, but Caven did lean forward while Nick ground his teeth to himself.

"Have you managed to get any information out of them?" Sannes questioned with a frown. "It's been days."

"Yes, well, Eren can't speak. We can only communicate with guessing and him nodding yes or no to tell us when we're right," Hange explained, keeping Krista out of the briefing. "That said, he claims to have no knowledge of what he is or how he became it."

"What he is?" Caven questioned with the slightest arc of a brow. "You're positive he's not a Titan?"

"Despite the size, he doesn't have any of the normal characteristics of Titans," Hange explained. "Sunlight isn't a factor, his healing is completely different in appearance, and he has an asshole."

Everyone blinked at that, Frieda snorting hard as she suppressed a laugh. "I'm sorry, did you just say that…?" Pastor Nick asked slowly.

"Titans don't have digestive tracks," Hange answered bluntly. "And despite no claims or signs of hunger, he does in fact have one."

"And you know this because…?" Caven asked with morbid curiosity.

"I checked," Hange answered bluntly. "I'm happy to show any of you that need visual proof."

"I believe we'll take you at your word, Field Commander," Frieda said in amusement. "And the Shifter?"

"It took time, but she eventually agreed to give up information and help us," Hange informed. "We've only learned a bit from her, but it's more than we would in years on our own."

"Assuming she is telling the truth," Sannes remarked. "Why do you believe she can be trusted?"

Pixis spoke up at that point. "We are taking anything she says with a grain of salt. But the information is too dangerous to ignore if true."

"Dangerous?" Caven asked with narrowed eyes.

"She confirmed that the Colossal and Armored Titans are Shifters," Erwin explained. "And claims they, and a third member, infiltrated the walls."

"Her comrades?" Frieda asked with a head tilt.

"She says no," Erwin answered. "I suppose that is why you're all here though, to judge if her information is worth the risk of keeping her alive."

"We are here to judge the creature as well," Pastor Nick said with a frown.

"I have already seen Eren with my own eyes, Pastor," Frieda answered calmly. "He has my vote. And I presume the vote of Commander Erwin and Commander Pixis."

"Vote?" Hange questioned in surprise.

"Our judgment is a simple majority, four out of six. If we deadlock, we either debate or return with an impasse for Zackery and the King to settle," Frieda answered with a smile, looking to the other two. "Caven, Sannes, what are your thoughts?"

"I'm not convinced he's not a Titan until I see him," Caven answered. "That said, I don't really care what he is, as long as I believe he isn't a threat."

"I'm skeptical, if only the claim that he knows nothing of what he is," Sannes remarked.

Frieda smiled at the Pastor. It was a cold smile. "Well, I'm sure we'll all have an enlightening time when you all see him at the Shifter's trial."

"What?!" Pastor Nick exclaimed.

Sannes raised an eyebrow but didn't protest, while Caven scowled. "Is that wise?"

"I've already had an enlightening conversation with this Eren," Frieda offered. "But if any of you are too uncomfortable meeting him face to face…"

"I-I have no fear of the enemies of the walls," Pastor Nick said under his breath.

"Good. Let us move on," Frieda said with finality.

"Yes, well, I was going to bring up a point," Sannes started, looking to the commanders. "Both of these things came from the 104th. You

claim there are more Shifters among us, so wouldn't that be the first place to look?"

Pixis nodded. "Indeed. We haven't had time to look into the backgrounds of any of them, but we also can't risk tipping them off before we know for certain whom they are."

"So that's your plan, do nothing?" Caven asked, unimpressed. "You haven't considered locking them up while you investigate?"

A grim silence came over the room.

"Oh, that is clever," Frieda stated suddenly.

"Hm? What do you mean, what's clever?" Nick asked in confusion.

"They've kept most, if not all of the surviving members of the 104th here… in Trost, and near the golden creature. If you assume that he is a foe to the shifters, and all evidence points to that, then they're essentially keeping all suspects in a pen with a rather potent attack dog, should they reveal their true nature," Frieda elaborated.

Sannes blinked before turning thoughtful. "It is a subtle prison, but it relies on trusting someone, or something, as unknown as this Eren Yeager."

"If this is an absurdly deep deception on his part," Erwin started. "Then we've still kept all parties contained in the area of Trost. Eren being our enemy is our worst-case scenario."

"And what plans do you have for that?" Pastor Nick asked sternly. "If the beast shows its wicked nature, what are you prepared to do!?"

Silence came over the room again.

"Well?!" Pastor Nick demanded.

"Nothing," Hange answered, blunt and stern. "Eren is a complete unknown to us. His scales are too strong for our blades, and he

recovered from the cannons with little issue. Our options for facing him are few and scarce. However, that just returns back to how senseless it would be for this to be a trick on his part."

"Senseless?" Sannes asked with a frown. "You expect sense from our enemies?"

"I believe she means enough sense that they aren't working against themselves," Frieda mused. "This Eren was able to block the breach in the wall. If he was working with the Colossal and Armored Titan, that would work counter to their apparent goal. Moreover, after seeing him myself and reading the reports, I'm fairly sure he could force a hole through the inner gate if he tried as the Armored Titan did to Maria."

Hange shared a glance with Erwin, who narrowed his eyes at the exchange. Frieda, the crippled noblewoman, was very much the one leading the conversation. It would be admirable if it wasn't suspicious.

She just hoped everything was going alright on Levi's end.

Meanwhile

"Does the golden brat have issues with anyone?"

An awkward silence came over the group as they stared at the small captain.

It was broken as Jean tilted back his head and laughed, while Connie and Sasha started snickering to themselves.

"What's so damn hilarious?" Levi asked in a cold, sharp tone.

Sasha and Connie went rigid while Jean got himself under control. "S-sorry, captain, but it might be easier to list who that hothead didn't have problems with!"

Levi frowned, looking to Armin and Mikasa, who looked awkward at his gaze.

"Well…" Armin started diplomatically. "Eren's personality tends to clash with… many people."

"Yeah, Eren's got a loud mouth on him," Reiner said with a grin. "But I wouldn't sell him too short."

Levi gave him a long stare.

Reiner swallowed nervously. "That wasn't a joke, Sir, I swear."

"Right. Let me be more specific. The ones coming to judge him and the Shifter are the noble lady from the other day, someone from the wall church, some government official I don't know about and someone from the military police. Does your friend have a stick up his ass about any of the new three I should know about?" Levi asked pointedly.

"Well, he doesn't like the Military police on principle, but even I don't think he'd cause a scene just because they're here," Jean said with a shrug.

"Eren does take being a soldier seriously, Captain," Armin answered, several of the others nodding. "That said, the Church of the Walls…"

"You can't exactly blame him there," Annie stated. "Being around them makes me want to vomit as it is."

"I know the feeling," Levi agreed. "But is it anything to worry about?"

"No, Sir," Mikasa answered. "In all the years I've known Eren, I've never known Eren to have any violent encounter with the Wallists."

No one looked remotely skeptical of that, Armin nodding in confirmation.

"Alright, good," Levi before taking a deep breath. "Here comes the heavy part. Ackerman, tell them."

"Sir?" she asked in surprise. He only stared at her before understanding dawned on her. All at once, she stood straighter before turning to her friends and comrades. "About the night with the cannons…"

She told them everything. There wasn't much to tell, obviously, but it was enough.

"Something… spoke through the wall?" Armin repeated slowly. "And it knew Eren's name?"

"Well, that's a nightmare story if I ever heard one," Reiner grumbled to himself, Bertolt and Annie trying not to look too uncomfortable.

"No way. Another one?!" Connie said with a groan. "Please tell me it's something friendly, like Ere- I mean, Trips?"

Levi hummed. "We don't think a Titan, but we haven't caught sight of it yet. I doubt it's left yet."

"Great, another strange monster to worry about," Jean said, getting a dark look from Mikasa. "I mean physically, not… anything else," he defended quickly.

"Why are you telling us, Sir?" Sasha asked curiously. "I mean, it doesn't sound like you know much about it…?"

"Because it's your responsibility to keep an eye on him. Not just for everyone else's sake, but his own as well. It won't do us a shit of good if you're all shocked when something new shows up," Levi answered simply. "Don't spread this though. Consider it a gag order. It gets out that there's something out there, we're going to have more twitchy fingers on the wall, even if the canons are pointed out."

Everyone looked mildly grim at that. Paranoid people made stupid mistakes. Paranoid soldiers make stupid mistakes with weapons.

Meanwhile

"Hey. Hey! You assholes didn't say anything about this bullshit!"

Ymir's yell held as much anger as it did fear. Not because of the chains, but of who they were on.

"What did you expect?" Petra asked idly, attaching cuffs to Krista's left wrist and ankle, attaching each to those of Ymir's right. "We can't exactly trust you, but we know you wouldn't harm her."

"Yeah, so basically, if they decide to execute me, I have to sit there and take it like a good bitch, or kill Krista by transforming," Ymir summed up.

"Or if you try to turn on us," Krista stated neutrally.

Ymir frowned at that, glancing at Petra. The scout sighed. "There's still time until the trial. I'll give you two a minute."

With that, they were left alone. Not really, Ymir was positive there were guards in earshot, but she'd settle for not having a visible audience

"You know I won't, right?" Ymir asked with a frown.

"No, I don't. I don't know anything apparently," Krista said with a snort.

Ymir looked down, trying to keep the hurt from her voice and tone. "You don't trust me."

"I trust you with my life," Krista answered immediately before sighing. "Just not to tell me the truth."

"…" Ymir gently pushed her down to sit on the bed and leaned to her ear. "I'll tell you anything."

Krista frowned, glancing at her uncertainly.

"Ask me anything, right here and now, and I'll tell you," Ymir offered as a solemn vow.

There were a thousand and one things Krista wanted to ask, but she stopped. She considered. And only one question came to mind. "What do I need to do, for you to tell us everything?"

"…" Ymir stared at her for a moment before smiling. "Survive, Krista. If we're both alive once this trial is over, I promise, I'll tell you everything. I'll tell them everything."

Krista opened her mouth, only for Petra to knock on the bars as she entered. "Sorry, but we can't put it off anymore."

Krista cursed in her mind while Ymir sighed in resignation. "Just answer me this, is there a reason they're not just judging me in here, where I'm safely locked behind a cell?"

Petra shrugged. "They insisted on it, for some reason. That's all I know."

Ymir frowned but didn't question further as she and Krista stood, heading out of the cell to face her literal judgment.

She supposed she should be glad she was getting a trial at all. That was more than she got back in Marley.

End of Chapter

So, yeah, Eren's playing matchmaker, the "judges" arrived, and the trial is ofifically going to start next chapter. Than the fun really begins.

Happy Halloween everyone!

Early viewing of chapters 18-19 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 18

Chapter 18

"You weren't able to slip away?" Reiner asked with a frown.

Annie shook her head, not bothering to elaborate. "And you too?"

Reiner glanced to Bertholdt who frowned in disappointment. "Ever since these judges showed up, they've been increasing security."

"Could they know about us?" Annie asked quietly.

"I don't think so," Reiner answered. "They're having a trial in Trost."

Annie frowned. "That sounds like bait."

"They're having it near the breach," Reiner clarified.

Annie paused at that, cupping her chin in consideration. "Bait, but perhaps not for us."

"That could be reinforcement for us though, right?" Bertholdt reminded, almost desperate to be hopeful.

"Like we're that lucky," Annie remarked, unconvinced.

*Reiner held up his hand in thought. "Wait, he has a point. Remember, they said that it was a voice, calling for " **Yeager.** ""*

Annie blinked. That… was a possibility, but it sounded strange the more she thought about it. "You think Pieck thought the Warchief was in here?"

"We don't know the situation out there," Reiner answered with his arms crossed. "We know more than the devils, but we're in the same boat: we can't be certain what is out there."

"But we can agree that this trial is bait," Annie remarked. "We need a plan."

"What do you mean?" Bertholdt asked. "Shouldn't we just lie low, until they let their guard down?"

"Ideally," Annie answered. "But if things go south, or we see a chance, we need to have a plan to take it."

"If something, anything else shows up, we let it play out," Reiner stated. "If the unknown… thing outside the wall isn't with us, we can have Bertholdt transform on them at point-blank. Hopefully, that'll kill one of them, and make it easier for me and Annie to deal with anything else."

"But, that would mean blowing our cover," Bertholdt reminded uncertainly.

Annie massaged her temple. "We have to start considering the possibility that the Coordinates are compromised."

Reiner looked at her in bewilderment.

"Eren, the lack of reaction to Maria and Trost, everything. Maybe the royal family doesn't have the Founder anymore," Annie pointed out grimly. "Regardless, information about something like Eren is almost as valuable as the Coordinates. The knowledge that there might be more creatures to challenge Titans in this world."

Reiner nodded reluctantly. "We'll see how this plays out and plan from there. As it is, we're just worrying ourselves in circles. All else fails and we have to escape, we can probably capture Ymir."

End of Flashback

That was all pretty easy to say and think in private.

"Tail!"

Many soldiers instinctively ducked down or knelt as the giant end of a tail passed overhead. It wouldn't have hit any of them if they hadn't dodged, but better safe than sorry.

"Watch it, Scales!" You'll poke someone's eye out with those!" Reiner called after the golden behemoth in jest, getting a look from the leftmost head.

He swore that head of Eren's grinned at him.

Reiner chuckled before allowing a troubled frown to form over his face.

There was one upside to the prospect of fighting Eren in this form- everything he and the others had taught their fellow cadet wouldn't translate well to a body without arms. But that was a small mercy. There was no way of telling just how durable Eren's body would be against hardened strikes from him and Annie. Or how much damage Eren's fangs could do against them in turn.

"Come on, Reiner!"

The blonde warrior shook his head as he caught sight of a grinning Connie.

"You don't want to miss the show, do you?!"

The show… that was one thing to call it.

The soldiers gathered atop and around the most undamaged buildings across from the sealed breach. There, several were fashioning some kind of pole into the ground. It was a testament to recent events that they didn't pay much mind to the giant beast looming nearby, watching the bustling of activity with mild interest, but it was obvious he was glancing at the boulder every now and again.

Or, maybe, the cannons atop the walls.

They were all taking aim at the area where, to Reiner's understanding, Ymir would be restrained for her "trial." But he was sure a few up there was watching the scaled creature too.

"Jeeze, there having it all the way out here?" Connie mused with a confused look. "Isn't that a bit dangerous? You know, with the Shifter?"

"Probably just some symbolic bull, judging her before the boulder and all that," Reiner answered casually as he studied the area.

Connie was right though. It was an obvious point, why give the prisoner more of a chance to escape? Even if it was just to project an image, it didn't feel right. Was it just really obvious bait, like they had thought?

Regardless, there wasn't much to be concerned about. Their swords and cannons couldn't breach his armor. Bertholdt could get rid of most of them just by transforming. Annie was a bit of a concern, but if the situation got too dicey for her, she could just lay low without shifting, maybe act as a surprise attack.

Still, seeing Eren looking at the boulder, Reiner was sure of one thing: the story about a voice beyond the wall wasn't some elaborate lie. It was unlikely to begin with, but Eren seemed too genuine in his worry to be faking it.

His eyes scanned the area once more, picking out where every one of his fellow cadets was. Bertholdt and Armin were on buildings closer to where the trial would be, Annie was across the clearing, the other side of things with Marco. Jean was keeping an eye on Sasha off to the side, closer to the wall. Mikasa…

Where was Mikasa? He couldn't see her, and that scarf was usually a great way to pick her out. That gave him some worry. His only guess was that she was somewhere up on the wall.

Either that or…

Meanwhile

Ymir felt no shame in admitting it to herself.

Being escorted to her "trial" by Mikasa-damn-Ackerman was more than a little intimidating.

Oh, sure, she wasn't the only one along for the ride. The soldiers had loaded Ymir and Krista into the back of a cart, still chained together. And right across from them was Mikasa.

The silence only made it tenser.

Ymir knew that the girl was dangerous, and everyone did. But with Eren Yeager dead, Ymir wasn't sure what Mikasa was capable of.

All the same…

"You got a relative?" Ymir asked bluntly.

Krista blinked at the random question while Mikasa frowned. "My parents are dead."

"Not what I meant," Ymir retorted. "You kind of remind me of the Shrimp."

"The Shrimp? You mean Captain Levi?" Mikasa took a guess.

Did she almost smile? Ymir swore she almost smiled.

"Yeah. There's a bit in the face, but you're both scary bastards with swords, and you kind of talk the same. Sometimes. It's the tone," Ymir rambled.

"Not that I know of," Mikasa answered with a shrug.

"Right," Ymir acknowledged. "So, if they decide I'm not worth keeping, what happens? They shoot me, or does the big guy just eat me alive?"

"Hey. Keep it down back there!" one of the soldiers snapped, riding nearby on horseback.

The silence returned.

"Obviously, they don't want you talking about the trial before we get there," Krista said with a sigh. "You know, so you don't try to escape?"

Ymir grimaced. "Sorry, right. Just trying to make small talk."

"If it makes you feel any better, I don't think he cares about holding a grudge," Mikasa stated. "He's more concerned with whose side you're on."

"He…?" Ymir repeated before shaking her head. "Right, three-heads. I almost forgot that thing can understand us. I'm guessing you've all been trying to talk with him?"

Mikasa raised a single brow before glancing to Krista.

The blonde tilted her head neutrally. "They didn't want me telling Ymir everything."

Mikasa hummed. "Most around here believe him, I think."

Ymir snorted in amusement. "Irony. I look human, but everyone's ready to chop my head off. He's a giant monster, but it seems like a lot are on his bandwagon."

Mikasa glared ever so slightly.

Krista cleared her throat. "To be fair, they haven't seen a lot of reasons to trust you yet, Ymir."

Yet. An interesting and important choice of words.

Ymir said nothing to that. It was true after all. "So, you here to kill me if I act up?"

"Yes. Mainly if you kill Krista first," Mikasa answered with cold indifference.

It was Ymir's turn to glare.

"Can you both… stop talking like I'm not here please," Krista requested awkwardly.

"Sorry," Ymir said, glancing away. "So, Mikasa. What's everyone else been saying about me?"

"We haven't really talked about you much," Mikasa answered.

Ymir snorted. "Guess the Golden Bastard got priority," she mused.

The rest of the ride turned to silence as they road through Trost.

Ymir narrowed her eyes as they went. She couldn't hear anything or feel anything. The giant lizard should be impossible to hide, every step shaking the ground; which meant he was either far away or standing still… or both.

A faint, reptilian call filled the air… far away then.

"He's getting impatient," Krista murmured offhandedly.

Ymir raised an eyebrow as she glanced at Mikasa ag-

She definitely saw a small smile that time. Mikasa had set her face to neutral fast enough, but Ymir was sure of it.

It felt like hours, but Ymir was sure the ride took only ten, fifteen minutes at most to get to the other end of Trost. They came to the clear area just before the breach-

And there was the golden wonder in all his gilded glory. His green eyes fixed on them almost instantly. Ymir swallowed and tore her gaze away, knowing it would just unnerve her to watch the six eyes watching her.

There were soldiers all over the place; the ground, the roofs, and the walls. And the cannons were pointed this way. The commanders were here too, with some people she didn't recognize. And just beyond them was a pole driven into the stones, with restraints on it. Lovely.

[[[[This is our trial too.]]]]

That was something Eren realized as he awaited for the "defendant" to arrive. This whole trial was some sort of presentation; soldiers working calmly with him nearby, a threat to no one. No one save any prisoner trying to escape.

It was a good idea, he supposed. Ignoring that they knew who he was, there was no denying his intelligence at this point, and showing he could be trusted to act as a guard to deal with Ymir should be decent proof for any that were still skeptical of him.

[We just need to pretend the cannons aren't pointed at us too.]

[[[They're not going to shoot us.]]]

[How do you know?!]

[[[They could hit the Commanders and the others!]]]

[[Shut up, both of you. You're making the priest uneasy.]]

All three heads tried to be as casual and unobvious as possible when they all glanced toward the Pastor in question.

Of the group around Frieda, he found only Pastor Nick a bother. The other two were on edge, but the wall zealot looked ready to spit venom but was keeping his words to himself… for now.

Everything grew quiet, the soldiers becoming still while eyeing a nearby street.

[[[[She's here.]]]]

Zwei suppressed the urge to snarl as the cart came into view, the freckled cadet sitting in a wagon; a wagon that held also Krista and Mikasa. That made it all the harder for the middle head to keep his ire from showing.

On a purely practical level, he didn't care about Ymir attacking him. If it was a misunderstanding, it was a misunderstanding. What she might be able to tell them about Titans was fundamentally more important.

He knew that, he did. Logically. But emotionally?

[You want to take another bite out of her.]

[[You're not helping.]]

[Don't worry, I do too.]

[[[That's WHY you're not helping.]]]

[And you don't?]

[[[Of course I do! But there's a damn time and place!]]]

[[And it's not now.]]

Still, as Eren watched, he couldn't help feeling like something was off about all of this. Something didn't feel right, not since he laid eyes on Ymir.

There were no words spoken to Ymir as she was led to the pole by Levi of all people, along with Krista, still chained to her.

The shifter sighed as she knelt and allowed her arms to be bound to the iron. "Fine, there, can you unchain her now?" Ymir asked gruffly.

"Shut it," Levi answered, nodding to Krista.

Ymir tensed as she felt Krista kneeling behind her, so they were back to back with the rod between them. "W-what's going on?" Ymir stuttered in shock.

"They want me here for the whole trial," Krista answered under her breath.

"Dammit. None of you better get trigger-happy up there!" Ymir barked out.

"You're not exactly helping your case."

Ymir's eyes turned to meet the gaze of…

She froze. She was older, and her hair was black, but that face was… It was almost Krista's.

"I'm Frieda Reiss," she introduced. "And you are Cadet Ymir of the 104th, correct?"

"Assuming that is her real name," a sullen-looking man remarked beside her.

"Yeah. Yeah, that's my name," Ymir answered, swallowing thickly. "I'm guessing you're my judges then?"

"I suppose we are," Frieda remarked. "Before we start anything, I think we should give you a chance to state your intentions."

Ymir stared pointedly, the air tense.

Frieda glanced in the direction of Erwin and Pixis over her shoulder. "Regardless of everything else, the Commanders say they have convinced you to work in the interest of the people of the Walls."

Ymir narrowed her eyes… that wording, the People of the Walls. Not Humanity. Well, that dismissed most of her doubts.

"Is that true, Ymir?" Frieda questioned.

Ymir firmed her lip. "It is."

Frieda's smile widens minutely. "Excellent. Now-"

A low, ominous growl silenced them all.

Every eye turned to the golden beast, whose gaze was intensely focused on Ymir. But his eyes were wide and trembling.

"I thought you said he was under control!?" Pastor Nick hissed to the Commanders.

Pixis frowned and Erwin was unphased, but neither of them answered as they observed the heads. The middle was still fixated on Ymir, but the other two were looking back and forth, as if lost and unfocused.

Mikasa gripped the handle of her sword tightly, resisting the urge to run out and figure out what was wrong.

"Krista, the fuck is up with him?" Ymir asked quietly.

Krista could only watch Eren with her own bewildered concern. "I don't know. He's just mumbling: It can't be, there's no way. It's like he's in shock."

Ymir started and paled as eyed the creature, realizing that it was starting to panic. And that middle head was staring at her intently. She didn't know how, but…

"Fuck. He figured it out."

"What are you talking about?" Krista asked, but Ymir didn't answer as she watched the situation grimly.

"Trips! Calm down!" Armin called out, standing on the edge of the roof closest to Eren.

Drei's head darted up and Armin felt something freeze in his throat; that terrible, awful look in Eren's eyes. It was sad, it was confused, yet there was rage building behind it. Armin hadn't seen a look like that since the Fall of Wall Maria, the death of Eren's mother. Something had happened, something only Eren had noticed, and his friend looked ready to attack… whatever it was.

"It's okay," Armin said, even if it wasn't. He needed everyone to think it was. "Just… calm down, you're scaring everyone. No one here is your enemy."

"He's right, Scales!"

Everyone, absolutely everyone saw how the three-headed creature stiffened.

Everyone except the speaker.

"Just tone it down a bit!"

The three heads turned numb, disbelieving orbs to the speaker.

Reiner blinked as Eren's eyes converged on him, the slits narrowed and piercing. "Oh. Right. That's how it is," Reiner whispered absently to himself, his shoulders slumped.

Armin looked at him warily. "Reiner? Is something wrong?"

"Yeah. Eren's a pain in the ass as usual," Reiner said with a fond sigh. "Always making things more complicated."

"Reiner," Armin said slowly, suspiciously. "We're supposed to call him Trips, remember?"

Even with his back turned, Armin was very aware of Eren's leftmost head looming protectively behind him.

"Right, right. Sorry, Armin. Guess I'm just… not cut out for this kind of stuff," Reiner remarked meaningfully.

"If… if there's a problem, we can talk about it," Armin offered, sweat forming on his brow.

Reiner sighed. "Sorry, Armin, but sometimes, there's nothing to talk about," he said, rubbing the back of his head. "Sometimes, we have to act. As soldiers…" he narrowed his gaze, glaring back at the reptilian head. "And, as warriors."

Before anyone could react, Reiner grabbed a knife from his belt and slashed his hand.

Thunder filled the sky.

"By the walls!" Pastor Nick cried out in alarm as the wind bellowed around them.

"Shit. So, they were here," Hange cursed with gritted teeth.

"Hey, Shrimpy?! Mind unchaining me?!" Ymir yelled from her spot.

Everyone watched with grimness or horror as, on the side of the building, a Titan formed. Not just any though.

The Armored Titan, his great, shielded from caving through the roof and wall.

[[[[It's him!]]]]

[[We were right.]]

[[[[But how?! WHY?!]]]]

[[[It's been them this whole time.]]]

[[[[All these years, everything…]]]]

[I can't believe it.]

[…]

[[…]]

[[[…]]]

[[[[…]]]]

[You damn… !]

[[vile… !]]

[[[lying… !]]]

[[[[TRAITORS!]]]]

Eins trembled with rage, mouth snarling. Zwei stared on with cold wrath and disbelief. Drei… Reiner swore that head looked ready to scream and cry.

The Armor Titan had waited for the trembling, wrathful lizard to make the first move. He wasn't disappointed.

With a roar of hate and rage, Eren lunged at the Armor Titan, mouth open and teeth ready to snare his foe.

Reiner punched the right-most head in the snout, but that barely stalled it as all three mouths latched onto him and slammed him through the building.

The nearest soldiers had cleared the area the moment the lighting fell and the enemy Titan began to appear, to avoid being caught in the fighting.

"W-w-what's going on!?" Pastor Nick cried out in panic.

"A battle, obviously," Caven remarked obviously. Sannes was tensed, ready to dodge or run, but didn't flee in terror.

"You all should evacuate behind the wall," Pixis said calmly, watching intently as their giant ally managed to keep the enemy Titan pinned.

"The rest of you go," Frieda said with a sigh, limping over to take a seat on a nearby crate. "I think I'll just rest here."

"Ma'am, this is serious, we need to move!" Anka said urgently.

Frieda just sat there with a tired smile as she watched the fight go on.

"If that is your decision," Erwin stated with a look at Frieda before turning to the others.

"I'll escort these two back to safety," Caven said, watching cautiously as she led Nick and Sannes away.

"The Scouts will secure Ymir," Erwin said to Pixis, who nodded as he used his maneuver gear to get to a less hazardous spot.

Erwin looked back to Frieda. "Did you have a plan?"

Frieda sighed heavily, as if two giant monsters weren't battling before her. "Yes, we did."

There was emptiness between the two, a silent agreement that there would be explanations later.

"Levi!" Erwin called.

"Already on it," Levi answered as he hurried to get Ymir unbound from the pole.

"About time, shrimp!" Ymir called, watching as the fight got way too close for her liking.

Levi's hand snapped to his weapon as another figure dropped down in front of them, but paused as he saw it was Armin.

A very slimy Armin.

"Ymir! Ymir!" he called desperately.

"You survived, that close to him?" Ymir asked in shock.

"Thanks to Eren, yeah," Armin said as he caught his breath.

Ymir blinked. "Eren?" she repeated before smirking. "Thought there was something familiar about the golden bastard."

"Look, there's no time for that! If Reiner is the Armored, then that means… the others have to be…" Armin looked at her imploringly, knowing the truth but needing confirmation.

"Yeah, yeah, it's Annie and Bertholdt," Ymir admitted quickly as her cuffs came loose.

"Now you talk?" Levi said with a scowl.

"Bertholdt? Annie? Bu-but how did Eren know?" Krista asked in shock as she dragged herself up.

"Who cares! We need to-Shit!" Ymir cursed as she looked to the battle.

Reiner's Titan managed to kick one of the heads off his side, giving him a chance to pull his way out of the building, Eren's teeth scrapping deep into his armor with a horrendous sound. The Armored Titan's path nearly led to the four of them getting stepped on. Ymir scooped Krista into her arms and started to run away as Levi and Armin escaped on their ODM gear.

Eren roared wrathfully as he tried to bite at Reiner again with one of his heads, but the Armored Titan jabbed him under the chin. It didn't hurt, but it was enough to knock the mouth closed. Reiner wasn't going to let him trap him so easily.

But he was acutely aware that the fangs had dug into his armor. Not all the way, but against Eren, he wasn't impenetrable. Another sustained attack like that and his golden foe might breach the

hardening. The unique ability of his own Titan was reduced to a temporary defense now.

Reiner glanced past his foe and wondered where Annie was. Bertholdt was waiting for the right moment, obviously, but he thought Annie would have joined the fight by now.

He heard the hiss of gas as blades broke against his armor. Reiner looked in surprise, seeing Mikasa landing nearby.

The look on her face was almost as terrifying as Eren's.

Her attack did no damage, but Eren didn't let the distraction slip away. Eins burst forth and bit into the Titan's lower leg.

Reiner struggled to keep his balance, lest he be pulled off his feet again. He raised a fist to strike at the head, but Zwei trapped that arm in his maw as well.

"Dammit, Eren," Reiner growled as his free hand struck the middle head in the one vulnerable spot Reiner knew of.

The green eye went wide as an armored fist buried into it, black blood gushing forth.

Eren screamed in pain, all three heads, but Eins and Zwei only latched onto him harder. Drei did as well, before he brought his head down, head-butting the Armored Titan in the head.

A great crack filled the air, the armor on the head of the Titan beginning to fracture and flake off as the Armored Titan fell once more.

"Amazing. Amazing, Amazing!" Hange all but gushed as she watched the battle unfold, her cheeks flushed ever so slightly. "Oh, Eren. So this is what it's like, watching you fight…"

"Section Commander! Please move back! You're too close!" Moblit called urgently.

"How can I move back, Moblit, from such a perfect view?" Hange asked with a grin, eyes never leaving the scene. For just a second, she sobered up. "Besides… he might need our help if more of our enemies show up."

The distinct sound of gunshots rang through the air, causing Hange to look off across the open space in surprise.

Then, just as with the Armored Titan, a lightning bolt fell from the heavens.

And there formed another titan. A new one, with blonde hair and a rather distinctive form.

"Well, those are definitely breasts," Hange remarked with a narrowed gaze. "Looks like the Female Titan has arrived."

End of Chapter

Well, bet you all weren't expecting that to kick off like it did! Yep, this whole trial was always going to turn into a big battle. Now Eren is in pure rage mode, and blew the cover for our Marleyan Trio.

To anyone that didn't figure it out, I showed a bit ago that Erendorah can see "auras" around living things, and that the Warrior Trio had unique ones. Eren saw Ymir for the first time since Battle of Trost, and noticed hers was the same as theirs. Three plus one is four, and Eren realized his friends are Shifters.

Hope you all enjoyed this! And Merry Christmas!

Early viewing of chapters 19-20 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 19

Annie didn't know what happened, but she could guess: Eren figured it out, he could tell who… what they were. It didn't matter how he could, just that he did.

And that he was fighting Reiner. And Reiner wasn't faring too well.

She was very aware of the soldiers around her. If she transformed now, she could take them out. But if she didn't, if she made a break for it, she might get a surprise attack on Eren. But Eren was in such a frenzy, he might not notice her transforming before she actually attacked.

Her mind made up, she readied to draw the hidden blade on her ring-

click

Her eyes went wide as she heard the tell-tale sound of a gun ready to fire.

Pivoting on her heel and arching her head low, she kicked at her would-be killer, cracking the jaw with a sickening crack. Without thinking, she jumped off the rooftop, taking off with a burst of gas

"You damn bitch!" another cried out before opening fire. As did others.

Annie hissed as she felt the bullet run through her chest.

In the haze between activating the transformations and her Titan forming, she vaguely registered what this meant. Their cover had already been blown; Eren hadn't been the only one to figure it out.

It didn't matter, not right now. Lightning touched her, flesh formed around her, and her Titan landed on her feet.

Turning to the clash of Eren and Reiner, she saw the Armored Titan fall with a great crash.

She didn't have much time before the soldiers reacted and took the chance she had. She rushed to her golden foe in a dead sprint.

Einz and Zwei were still keeping the struggling Reiner off his feet. Drei was about to make a bite towards the neck. He didn't hear or feel the ground-shaking steps, but his eyes snapped toward the rushing mass in the corner of his vision.

A Titan, an enemy.

Nothing else registered, his tails swinging to strike her. But the Female Titan was too close now, sidestepping before leaping to give a strike to Drei's head.

Annie's only regret was not hardening her knuckles. If not for the tails, she would have.

The leftmost head growled in pain and fury before turning towards the new foe-

[[[[Annie.]]]]

If he hadn't known beforehand, he never would have guessed, might have never noticed the similarities. The blond hair, the sharp blue eyes. But that fighting stance? Who else could it be, but Annie?

The wound of betrayal refreshed itself as he turned and, with a great heave, he threw one traitor at another.

Annie expertly dodged Reiner's armored body as Eren glowered down hatefully at her. She could see it in his eyes, wrath that would literally tear her apart, limb from limb.

There was only an instance of pause before his mouths opened.

Trying not to give him a chance to act, Annie struck forth-

-And Eren roared.

[[[[I'll wipe you out!]]]]

He roared loud and hard, right in her face. Annie found herself abandoning her attack, as pure agony suddenly coursed through her head.

[[[[Every Last One!]]]]

She fell to her knees as blood rushed from her ears, both her human and Titan form. She clutched them, trying to block out that terrible sound, Eren's hateful roar.

{[{[FROM THIS WORLD!]}]}

She forced herself to look up, teeth gritted as she met his gaze.

Meanwhile

"Thank god he stopped," Ymir said with a groan leaning against the wall, clutching her head as she looked to Krista-

She froze as she saw Krista clutching her skull.

"H-hey, are you okay?" she asked in concern and bewilderment.

"I can hear him," Krista answered with a pained grimace. "I can hear everything he's yelling at them."

"That bad?" Ymir asked as they stood in the alley.

"It's like it's right in my ear still," Krista answered as she pulled her hands down. "What do we do?"

Their eyes met.

"I'm not going to try and run away," Ymir promised, holding up their still-cuffed hands. "But shrimpy didn't have enough time to get our

cuffs off. And I can't transform with you this close."

"So, we need to find a way to get this off," Krista summarized.

"Well, that or something to…" she paused uncomfortably. "Cut my hand off."

"Wha-?!" Krista looked at her in shock. "Why would-!? Are you-!?"

"Look, it'll hurt like a bitch, but I can regrow a hand, okay?" Ymir explained with a sigh.

"O-oh," Krista said in stunned understanding, trying to ignore the sounds and vibrations of the battle. "Well, if we have to-"

"I think I can save ya some pain and blood there."

Krista started at the voice while Ymir turned, protectively placing the smaller cadet behind her.

A man was walking down the alley, with ODM gear. But there was something weird about it to Krista. There weren't any blades, just metal cylinders where they should be stored.

He tipped his hat up and smirked at Ymir. "Still on edge, eh, Frecks?"

"Oh, it's you, Geezer," Ymir said with a sigh, just a bit relieved.

"Ymir, you know him?" Krista asked, stepping out beside her.

The man smirked. "Good, you're still alive. Frieda've had my hide if something happened to your blond head."

Krista blinked. "Me? Wait…" she stopped and squinted "… Kenny?!"

"Still kicking, farm girl?" Kenny asked with a smirk.

Now it was Ymir's turn to be surprised. "Wait, you two know each other?"

"We met once," he remarked with a shrug.

"That's… one way of putting it," Krista agreed tentatively, giving him a suspicious look. "What happened to me keeping a quiet life?"

"Change in plans. Your girlfriend here and I had a little talk about why she should work for us," Kenny explained, nodding to Ymir.

"When did-" Krista stopped and sighed. "We don't have time for this. Can you… do something about this?" she asked, holding up their shackled wrists.

"That I can," he answered, holding up one of his weapons. "Just pull'em apart, no need for either of ya to be losing a limb over this."

Both girls did as he said, eyeing the barrel cautiously as he aimed it at the chain between them.

With a pull of the trigger, both of their ears were ringing.

"Walls, that is loud!" Ymir exclaimed, reaching up to rub her left ear. With a scowl, she looked at Kenny as he reloaded his gun. "What now?"

"You should probably join the fight, or keep an eye out for a good chance. Make ya look good to everyone else," Kenny suggested. "I got to make sure our little princess makes it out of this alive."

Ymir glanced skeptically between the two before Krista spoke up. "Ymir, go. I'll be fine," Krista assured firmly.

"… Right," Ymir accepted begrudgingly.

"Just watch yourself, Frecks," Kenny advised, glancing up at the darkening skies. "Storm's a brewin."

Meanwhile

Erwin observed the battle stoically. The Armored titan was still down. He had been getting up until Eren's stunning roar was let loose. Now he was collapsed again, either out cold or just unable to move.

"Finish it, Trips!"

"Kill her already!"

"You got her right where you want her!"

Eren had the Female Titan pinned; face down with his foot talons digging into her back.

However, despite several attempts, he hadn't been able to bite through her nape.

"Erwin!"

He glanced to the side as Levi approached. "Ymir and Krista?"

"Almost got squashed, but alive," Levi answered pointedly.

Erwin picked up the extra meaning. They weren't in their custody.

"What should we do?" Levi inquired, looking out as the Armor Titan got back to its feet.

Eren wasn't blind to this either, Eins snarling before reaching down to snap his jaw onto the back of Annie's neck, trying to either bite through or crush his foe within.

Reiner, seeing his comrade in danger, made into a sloppy charge, leaping and tackling at the golden reptile. With Annie pushing from underneath him, Eren found himself knocked onto his side.

The hardened nape of the Female's neck was ripped away though, torn from her unhardened flesh and crumbling in the fanged maw.

Briefly, Annie's human form was exposed before her Titan's hands concealed her while her Titan healed. Reiner was guarding Annie, in case any of the soldiers tried to attack in her moment of weakness.

Erwin summarized that The Female Titan had the ability to make her skin stronger, like the Armor Titan's, but it seems to be temporary. Otherwise, why not use it all the time?

"There's still a third enemy in hiding," Erwin reminded warily.

Levi frowned. "Ymir said it was Bertholdt."

"Hoover, the tall one," Erwin recalled. "Eren can handle either of these. Maybe both of them."

"But the third is the Colossal," Levi stated in understanding.

Eren snarled as he tried to roll back onto his feet, slowed slightly by his lack of arms. Seeking to return the favor from earlier, Reiner ran forward to grab Eren's left leg, keeping it off the ground. Eren growled dangerously. His other leg was too short and at a bad angle to swipe at Reiner. His left tail was too close. Was the right one though?

Annie didn't give him the chance to try. Or, at least, that was her intent as raced forward.

Until someone tried to cut the tendons behind her ankles. Jumping just in time, Annie found herself being swarmed by ODM-equipped soldiers.

While the Female Titan cursed her luck, Armin landed just in front of Eren's form. "Eren! Focus on Reiner! Let them worry about Annie!" Armin advised.

The golden beast looked back at the fight between humans and Titans. Annie wasn't armored. She was vulnerable to their blades.

As Armin cleared the area, Eren grinned three savage grins as his right tail slammed into Reiner, mashing the Armored Titan between his scales and the weapon upon his tail. And again, and again.

"Dammit, Eren!" Reiner cursed to himself. He had tried to break the leg, or even just dislocate it, but his Titan wasn't strong enough. It took everything he had just to keep Eren from jerking the leg free.

Snarling in frustration, Eren tilted his body, rolling in the opposite direction. Caught in surprise, Reiner was nearly pulled over before he released Eren, who partially slammed into a building as a result of his body roll. With a dissatisfied tsk, Reiner made a quick retreat to help his ally against her enemies.

Eren shook the debris off his back as he stood back up, eyes instantly finding his foes once more.

He froze as he saw Reiner crush a soldier in his hands, Annie breaking someone's spine as she yanked them by their wires. They were slaughtering the soldiers, crushing them like bugs.

[{[{Maggots.}]}]

His rage renewed with an icy fuel to it, he snarled and readied to attack them once more. Reiner's armor was becoming more of a spider-web of damage. Just a bit more, and he could put him down, and then Annie.

And then Bertholdt, and whoever else he had to kill!

He charged the pair, the soldiers dispersing to dodge. The shifters, knowing they had little other option, charged him as well. Reiner tried to strike the rightmost head dead on, but Eins moved to the side, his horn scrapping and sparking against Reiner's arm as he pushed past to bite his foe in the side.

Annie, however, leaped to Eren's left and brought a hardened heel kick into his eye. Drei screamed as blood burst from the optical

organ, destroyed but already starting to regenerate.

Or it would have been if Annie hadn't used the momentum of her own spin to quickly strike with an open fist, her hardened fingers going right into Drei's destroyed eye.

Drei screamed as Annie's digits stabbed into his brain. Eins bit harder into Reiner, more out of pain than rage while Drei let out what sounded like a dying groan, his head falling limp. Annie attempted to free herself but found her hand actually stuck in the skull itself, as if it somehow had her in a death grip. Zwei hissed murderously while biting into the offending arm.

Desperate, Annie hardened her other hand, hoping to take two heads out.

"You bitch!"

"Get away from him!"

That was the only warning Annie got as Mikasa sliced her ankle tendons, and Hange cut through the fingers, below where the digits had hardened. Both women had equally dark looks on their faces as Annie fell to her knees.

Eren's head awkwardly, painfully ripped the arm out of his other head's eye. Everything felt strange. Partially, painfully numb. Three heads or not, a stab to the brain was painful.

With deep breaths, Zwei lurched over and grabbed the struggling Reiner by the shoulder. With his two remaining heads, he slammed the Armor Titan into the Female, laying them on top of each other. Quickly, he placed a foot on Reiner's back, trying to keep him pinned.

He was only half aware of his surroundings now, trying to acclimate to the pain of a dead brain. He couldn't keep them pinned long. And in his absent haze, he had pinned them with Annie on her back.

Getting to her nap wouldn't be easy. And Reiner wouldn't stop squirming.

He froze as thunder once more rang through the air, the bolt coming down just meters away from them. To his surprise, it was not the enormous Colossal that appeared before him.

It was the Jaw Titan. It was Ymir's titan.

The smaller shifter was coming towards them.

"Hey."

Zwei was suddenly aware that Levi was on his head. When he got there, he wasn't sure.

"Don't get bite-happy. She's supposed to be on our side now, remember?" Levi reminded cautiously.

Suppose to be, Eren was acutely aware of.

Still, he heeded the captain's words, letting the Titan approach.

"Hold him," Ymir growled out, snapping her jaws. "Bite him out."

Could she do that? Zwei wanted to know, moving his mouths to latch onto Reiner's arms and keep in pinned. Annie started to struggle again and must have tried something, because Levi swooped by, faster than the eye could catch, and sliced out the Female Titan's eyes.

Ymir climbed up on the two bodies, and Eren was suddenly very much aware that Ymir was once more in biting distance of both his necks. Not a sentiment he enjoyed, but he was rewarded with the almost metallic sound of Ymir biting into the nape of the Armored Titan. It was already fractured, allowing her to take it apart in three full bites. Reiner struggled more and Eren could feel Annie kicking uselessly while attempting to get free.

Before Ymir could go for the finishing bite, Annie let loose a loud, feral wail. It was more desperate than rage, the echo of her screams reverberating out as violent winds.

COME!

Eren blinked. He could understand that scream, Annie's scream. How, he wasn't sure, but what was Annie calling out to?

"EREN!"

Oh. Right. Between the pain and rage, he had forgotten.

With much effort, Zwei managed to see him off to the side. There stood Bertholdt, on a rooftop.

Holding a sword to Armin's throat.

"Let them go, right now, or I slit his throat!" Bertholdt screamed out desperately.

"Eren, don't do it-!" Armin tried to plead before Bertholdt roughly covered his mouth.

"Do you really want his blood on your hands, Eren!?" Bertholdt threatened, pulling the blade just enough to draw blood.

"Armin!" Eren faintly heard Mikasa call out in alarm.

Ymir, seeing the stand-off, hesitated. With how Eren could be, she knew he might just attack her if she endangered Armin's life.

Eren growled into his bites. He wouldn't give up Armin so easily, but he could at least buy everyone time.

Bertholdt was about to yell again when he saw the injured, downed head of Eren raise up with unsteady and wobbly motions. He stared on with an uneasy expression as he looked into the one eye that

remained on it. The bright green was now dull, empty, and lifeless. The head twitched and seized before…

The eye blinked.

Bertholdt, and many others, were slightly disgusted as the orange goop that came with Eren's regenerations was suddenly vomited forth from the head, covering the ground. Drei shook himself stiffly, flexing his jaw as his gaze came in and out of focus before he stared directly at Bertholdt.

With both eyes, the other now healed. Obviously along with his brain.

"Okay. Okay," Bertholdt muttered uneasily before calling out again. "Now let them go! Both of them!"

Armin was still trying to shake his head, silently begging Eren not to let their enemies slip away.

Drei looked pained, and not physically, as he stared at his endangered friend.

"Eren! Ymir!"

He blinked in surprise at the call, his middle head lurching around to stare at…

Frieda?

She was still sitting on her box, as if it were a front-row seat to a show. She smiled at him mysteriously, cupping her hand to her mouth. "It's fine! Make the trade!"

[[[[… What?]]]]

"Lady, are you crazy!?" someone yelled, possibly Jean.

Still, she just smiled. Eren suddenly wasn't sure whose side she was on, but…

Was there a plan here? Something he didn't know about? While some of the soldiers were voicing their disapproval, he didn't notice any of the Commanders among them.

If Bertholdt lying, and he killed Armin no matter what… then Eren would then he'd just go back to killing them. And he'd know not to trust them next time they tried taking hostages.

With hostile uncertainty, Eren released Reiner and stepped back. Ymir leaped to Eren's side, both of them eyeing the Titans as Reiner quickly got to his feet, raising his fists into a defensive stance as Annie rolled into a crouch. One of her eyes was healed and her ankles just finished as she slowly got to her feet.

While the other heads watched them, Drei looked to Bertholdt, as if daring him to break their agreement. The tall teen frowned, realizing the dangerous position he found himself in. It's not like if he let Armin go they were just going to all walk away. Kill Armin and Eren would attack… which might be what he needed to do, bait Eren into getting too close.

Or, should he transform now? It was slim, but Bertholdt knew there was a chance that Eren could kill him before he had a chance to transform. Not to mention the soldiers he was sure were creeping closer to his location. If he transformed now, he could still just attack Eren as the Colossal. No matter how strange a creature the three-headed beast was, it couldn't handle something as overpowering as a sixty-meter titan.

"Don't suppose you're any more willing to talk about this?" Armin asked with a bitter smile.

Bertholdt brought the blade away, just a bit, because his hand trembled. "I'm sorry, Armin, but… there's nothing to say," Bertholdt apologized.

"So, all this time was…?" Armin trailed off sadly.

"We had to. We had no choice," Bertholdt said, more to himself than his hostage. "That's… that's just the way this world is."

"Does it have to be?" Armin asked, disappointed.

"Yes," Bertholdt responded, closing his eyes for an instance to steady himself.

"How can you be sure, if you won't even tell us why you're doing this?" Armin challenged. "If you won't even try?"

Bertholdt went still. "I…"

Whatever he might have said was silenced by the sounds of cannon fire.

Eren let out a growl of alarm as he looked to the walls, heads jolting away from potential cannonballs. Reiner moved in front of Annie as a shield while Ymir stayed crouched in Eren's shadow.

But all grew confused and tense as they realized the cannonballs weren't being shot into Trost but beyond the wall. There was screaming too from up there, faint as it was with the explosions. Eren glanced at all three of his enemies and found them all confused. As was Ymir, and everyone else he could see.

Except for Frieda, her smile more amused than anything now.

Zwei eyed her suspiciously before all three heads growled low in his throats. Eren realized what was happening: Their mystery guest was making a move.

The cannons stopped and soldiers could be seen fleeing from the walls as something emerged and climbed over the top of the wall.

It was ten meters high, give or take, but the strangest thing about it was its limbs. It had only two limbs that were more like arms than

legs, its elbows each forming into a large spike. From its back was a long tail, and from the neck a long-snouted head. Like a reptile's, but the texture almost made the head look like it was just a skull without skin or flesh. Its body was dark grey, and scaly, with a crimson line going down its head, spine, and tail

No one dared to move, watching the new party as it looked over the battle, its gaze settling on the three-headed beast.

Eren eyed it warily, not knowing what to expect, not knowing what he was even looking at.

Then the creature opened its wide mouth and bellowed one word over Trost. One name, clear as crystal.

"YEAGER!"

Stunned silence washed over Trost, not even the wind daring to make a sound. Until the two-legged monster leaped off of the wall, its three-clawed feet digging into the massive structure, slowing its descent.

"Shit, it can climb," Levi muttered, both blades at the ready as he watched the unknown party.

Halfway down, it pushed off the wall, crashing down onto the roof of the nearest building.

"The hell is that now!?" Connie screamed, having dodged from its landing point. He watched it as it shrugged off the force of the fall, and was already running across the rooftops at frightening speeds, with an almost serpentine movement to it.

Everyone watched in dread and anticipation as it raced towards the square, Eren tensing and preparing to face whatever had just crawled up to seek him out.

Reaching the last house, it gave a mighty leap across the opening.

And barreled towards the pair of Titans.

Reiner cursed his luck as the strange thing jumped at him. He raised his fists to block it, but its fingers grasped onto his limps and effortlessly swung itself around to his back. His hands quickly reached up to cover his nap.

Annie struck at the skull and, to her shock, found herself breaking her Titan's hand.

It turned to her, looking right at her with sunken eyes as its mouth opened and spoke.

"Dogs of Marley!"

Annie and Reiner froze in shock, and it cost them. A very long tongue lunged out, grabbing the offending arm and dragging it into the mouth!

She tried to pull herself free, but the creature allowed itself to be brought along, its tail wrapping around the Armored Titan's neck and dragging him to the ground as a result.

Eren watched the fight, his shock turning to fascination. Then something darkly satisfying settled in him. Now it was three on three.

His six eyes drifted to the one issue: Bertholdt.

"What the hell? Another one? Just how many monsters do you devils have?" Bertholdt whispered in disbelief.

Seizing the moment, Armin took the chance to elbow Bertholdt, striking him right between the legs. The shifter let out a silent scream of surprise and pain as Armin was able to pull himself free without further injury. He seethed in frustration as he saw the small blonde escape on his ODM gear.

Eren, seeing the opening, made a dead sprint toward Bertholdt.

Feeling the tremors before he even looked, the tall teen grimaced as he took off on his ODM gear. But not to flee.

He flew right towards his foe.

Time slowed for Bertholdt as he stared into those three maws of deadly teeth, all ready to devour him. To destroy him.

If Bertholdt didn't destroy him first.

He closed his eyes and focused on the scratch he had made on his hand, waiting until he could feel the breaths, the jaws instances away from ending his life.

Lighting struck down from the heavens once more, and a bright light enveloped them all.

The last thing Bertholdt could see was those emeralds of ever-flowing hate.

And from her spot, Frieda sighed in resignation.

End of Chapter

That's right folks, its a Skull-Crawler! If you're wondering how it can talk, that's actually canon- Skull Crawlers can imitate human voices, usually to lure humans towards them. Creepy, I know.

But other than that, big fight happens, Kenny showed up but things are defnitely not canon, and Frieda is being Frieda. And as literally everyone knew, Bertholt's explosion was the big curveball in this fight.

And to everyone saying that Erendorah is "weak" he's basically a toddler version of Ghidorah. That's why he doesn't have wings or gravity beams yet.

Early viewing of chapters 20-21 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 20

Chapter 20

Krista coughed as she pulled herself off the ground. The entire ground felt like it had jumped out from under her before a great rush of dust and wind swept through the city. "W-what, gah, was that?!"

"Damn, sounds like the big bastard showed up," Kenny remarked as he slapped the dust off his hat before putting it back on his head.

"Who?" Krista asked, standing up and looking at her apparent guardian. She caught his grim expression as he stared upwards. She followed his gaze and felt something sink into her gut.

The Colossal Titan. She could only see the silhouette through the cloud, but it could be no other foe. She knew no other Titan that tall.

All at once, she started running back to the square, until Kenny snatched her hand.

"Hold up! Yer just goin get yourself killed, runnin off like that!" Kenny reprimanded as he held her firmly.

"Let me go! I have to know what's going on!" Krista yelled as she tried to pull herself free.

Kenny groaned and shook his head. "Don't be stupid! Quit strugglin so much or I'll-"

"You'll what? Slit my throat like you did my mother's?" Krista asked pointedly.

Silence overcame them for an instance.

Kenny frowned at her. "Ya know, most say that to me a bit more spitefully."

"Yes, well, most don't have a mother that was trying to kill them at the time," Krista retorted hotly.

"Yeah, keepin you alive seems to be a repeat job of mine," Kenny remarked with an eye roll. "And I can't let you just-OW!"

Kenny let Krista go from a sudden pain, allowing Krista to pull free and run off.

"Damn little bitch bit me!" Kenny cursed, smirking as he shook his injured hand and ran after her. "Fiery little sister ya got, Frieda."

Krista kept running, ignoring the burning in her lungs and the apprehension filling her stomach as she drew closer and closer to the square again, the Colossal looming ever taller from her point of view.

Meanwhile

The world was mute to Mikasa, numb almost, as she pulled herself off the roof where she had landed. She reached up to touch her forehead and found a bit of blood staining her hand. Not much. It was just a scratch, nothing serious. Assuming she didn't have a concussion.

What had happened? Something… new showed up, attacking the Shifters. Armin got free from Bertholdt. She had flown near to him, in case he was injured and crashed. But then there was the sound of something buzzing in the air, a bright light, and then she was hurled across the rooves.

Armin, where was he?

She blinked, realizing he was right next to her. There was a wound on his neck, but it wasn't bleeding now. And he was… speaking to her?

"-Mikasa!? Mikasa, can you hear me?!" Armin's voice suddenly flooded her ears.

"… I'm alright. I think," Mikasa answered, calm but confused as she looked around, stopping as she became aware of the giant figure looming over the city. Everything came together now. "Bertholdt. He transformed."

Armin gave a pained nod to her numb recollection. "Yeah. Thought we were all going to be swallowed by the blast, but the explosion from his transformation seemed to… implode, for some reason."

Mikasa barely registered what he said as she looked over Trost, but could see nothing through the thick fog. It was quiet though… too quiet.

Until it wasn't.

Cannons along the walls began to fire at the Colossal Titan, aiming for the nape. The foe slowly but surely turned to face the attackers, ready to destroy the defenses once more.

Armin gritted his teeth, knowing that Bertholdt might just open the breach again. And they might not have a way to stop him, not without-

"Where's Eren?"

The words left Mikasa's mouth before she even registered them. Her feet began running soon after.

"Mikasa, wait!" Armin called after, following her as they traveled closer to the Colossal, where it had appeared.

Mikasa felt the pounding in her head again, a strange numbness over her body, everything playing over and over again in her mind, from when she had first laid eyes on Eren's new golden form, to the

last instant she saw him glaring down at Bertholdt mere moments ago.

This couldn't be happening again, not so soon, not after she got him back!

Before she even realized it, she was standing on the broken end of a roof, the building half destroyed and annihilated by the Colossal's transformation. She stared down, through the ash and dust as she saw a horrifically familiar shape of a body with no arms and three necks.

Eren's form was collapsed in the crater, motionless. Steam and heat radiated off the golden scales… and at the end of each neck was a stump. Each head was eviscerated, with nothing to remain and even the wounds had been cauterized. There was no movement, no sign of regeneration… just stillness.

Lifeless.

Dead.

Gone.

"No. No, no, not again," Mikasa whispered, her eyes intense. "Eren…"

A loud thunderclap rang out behind her. The sound of a Titan transformation, she now knew. She ignored it; just as she ignored Armin calling out for her to move, to snap out of it. She ignored everything as she tried to comprehend the reality in front of her.

The shifters had killed Eren. They took him away from her.

She gripped the handles so hard, anyone else's hands would be bleeding. She turned, seeing Reiner's outstretched hand inching closer, to crush her before she overcame her shock.

But it was far too late for that.

Reiner inhaled sharply as Mikasa vanished, sparks forming up his arms as she reappeared in his face, Stabbing Her Sword Into His Eye!

It broke on impact, shattering against the protective lens. But the sight of Mikasa ferociously stabbing her broken blade against his eye was truly something out of a nightmare for Reiner.

Regaining his nerve, he reached up to swat her away, Mikasa dodging at the last second.

"Where is she? Where's she go?" Reiner asked, looking around in all directions. A spray of blood erupted from over his shoulder.

He scowled. Mikasa was attacking the gaps between his armor, but she couldn't do any true damage. Nothing important was where she could strike, and he would regenerate before the damage became a problem. That didn't make it any less annoying.

Distracted by the Ackerman, he had no chance of noticing as Hange stood before the headless corpse with an unreadable expression.

"Is that really it for you?" Hange whispered, reaching out to place a hand on the golden scales. She couldn't feel any heat coming off them, so it should be safe to-

The earth screamed with endless, starving voices.

The skies filled with screeching wings of lightning.

Mountains rose to do battle, from the heavens to the depths.

The Seas roared to challenge the Heavens, and the Heavens answered.

And all was torn asunder by their clash.

Hange recoiled, her hand jerking away. "What… was that?" she whispered in shock, sweat forming on her brow as she tried

desperately to latch onto the images that passed through her head. They were scattered, almost incomprehensible.

"Be careful, Hange Zoe."

She instantly had a sword pointed at the voice, seeing the figure of Frieda Reiss, walking out of the dust cloud with her walking stick.

"He might hurt you," Frieda warned ominously.

Hange didn't lower her weapon, narrowing her eyes. "You know exactly what's going on, don't you?"

Frieda didn't say anything, nor did she deny it.

"Eren's not dead, is he?" Hange stated suspiciously.

Frieda glanced at the golden form for a moment before shaking her head. "No, it's not nearly that easy to slay Him."

Hange breathed deeply for a moment. If that was true, this injury was still obviously too much for Eren to just shrug off and regrow his heads. "What do we need to do?" Hange asked pointedly.

Frieda hummed, ignoring the sounds of battle around them. "I can help him."

Hange eyed her. "The catch?" she asked, knowing she would have done it already otherwise.

"No catch," Frieda denied with a shake of the head. "Just a problem. He'll wake up."

Hange furrowed her brows. "How is that a problem?"

Frieda gained an empty look in her eyes, her expression hollowed with her gaze drifting high to the dark clouds gathering overhead. "It is time," Frieda said, turning to step closer to the gilded hide.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Hange asked warily, sword still pointed at the noble.

Frieda turned to her with an expression that was almost… apologetic? Unsure? Something sad was in that gaze, something that Hange couldn't read. "You'll want to move away. It's about to be very dangerous here," Frieda said, holding up her right, crippled arm and pulling back the sleeve.

Hange narrowed her eyes as she saw the scars all up and down the arm. Not scars from a blade or blunt instrument. No, these scars formed fern-like patterns, curling and branching out so that barely an inch of the limb didn't have a mark upon it. One might mistake it for an intricate, stylized tattoo of a tree and its branches. But Hange had only seen scars like that from one thing.

When someone survived being struck by lightning.

Hange inhaled, feeling… something filling the air as Frieda's hand moved to touch those golden scales. Every instinct in Hange's body told her that, right here and now, she was far too close.

With that, she used her ODM gear to put some distance between herself and this spot.

Just as Frieda made contact.

Meanwhile

Burning. Burning. Burning.

But he did not burn as all around him was scorched and ashen.

What had happened? What had he been doing?

He pulled himself up, his three heads shaking free of the dust. All around him was smoldered and melted, the air heavy with steam and dust.

A battle; He had been in a great battle. And then, the burning came. It hurt, a deep and harsh pain, but it was not enough to stop him.

Nothing was enough to stop him. Only slow him, stall him, delay him.

The winds turned, and the air cleared to reveal the world.

Beneath the rumbling heavens and the harsh rain, the dead littered the battlefield; corpses of all shapes and forms, mutilated and destroyed. The mighty and the weak, all had fallen.

All had fallen to the Golden Demise or fled to escape, as all others that had dared to stand against him.

The ground shook. Again, and again the ground shook.

The Earth quaked with footsteps, the air filling with that accursed scent of salt and power.

He was coming.

He was not like the others.

He was the rival, the defiant, the mightiest of this world.

Three mighty heads turned, looking into the thinning mist of ash, and saw the shadow of his foe.

Lightning cackled in the skies, the winds tore the very land asunder, and power rippled in his chest as he reared his body back in a display of power.

And through the mist of war, he saw his hated foe, illuminate by a vile blue glow.

Meanwhile

Bertholdt forced a stream of smoke to erupt from his body, stopping another attempted attack at his neck. He had managed to destroy

most of the cannons, but that didn't stop the soldiers from trying to target his nape on their own. One, in particular, was Captain Levi of the Scouts. He made Bertholdt especially nervous, having been fast enough to get his blades in the flesh before being sent away with the steam. That would have incapacitated most enemies, the burns from the heat, but the captain just seemed to ignore any and all pain.

What could he do though? The only option that seemed left was to reopen the breach so that he and the others could escape in the confusion. But there weren't many Titans immediately outside Trost, if any at all. Then again, that gave them a good chance to escape, assuming no one tried to pursue them too far outside the wall.

He had to hold out a bit longer though, let Reiner make sure that Eren was truly dead. Maybe capture Ymir, but he doubted it. All he knew was that the moment he kicked in the breach, his comrades would know that was the signal to escape.

They just had to pray that no more monsters showed-

Behind him, lightning erupted into the sky. Not from the sky, into it. A pillar of thunderbolts erupted, striking up to the clouds above.

Levi scowled as he landed on the wall, watching the light show. "What now?" he asked himself, eyeing the source of the phenomenon.

Eren's presumed corpse.

The tails snapped into a house.

"Eren?" Mikasa whispered in disbelief, landing on a roof.

"You got to be kidding me," Reiner said through gritted teeth as he stared through the smoke.

The headless body twitch and spasmed, awkwardly stumbling to its feet, tails and necks swishing all about mindlessly. The entire form

convulsed in a violent fashion, orange goo oozing from the necks, electricity dancing across the scales before, suddenly-

With a strangled screech of a roar, three malformed and undersized heads forced their way out of the wounds. With every second, they grew larger and corrected their forms, already snarling for blood and battle.

"Oh no you don't!" Reiner yelled as he raced to attack before Eren could finish healing, ready to barrel into him and rip the heads off with his own hands if he had to.

"Eren, look out!" Armin called from the rooftop, other voices joining in. But he had no idea if Eren could even hear yet, let alone-

With a mighty swing of both tails, Reiner was sent crashing into the half-destroyed building. Armin quickly vacated the perch as the Armored Titan's form quickly destroyed what was left of it.

"He got him!" Marco called out in relief.

"Yeah, he did," Jean said with a narrowed look, watching as the form of Eren's three new heads stood there, coiled and turning towards the Armor Titan with a distinctly predatory stance about him. "Why do I have a bad feeling then…?"

"Dammit," Reiner muttered as he pulled himself out of the wreckage, about to stand when-

He froze, seeing the heads looming over him, a shadow over all three visages. Had… had Eren gotten bigger, somehow?

He didn't have time to contemplate that as the ground rumbled. Eren looked up, just as a giant red hand came down upon him, fingers closing around him.

It unnerved Reiner, seeing how little of a reaction that garnered from his golden foe, even as the first lifted him from the ground.

"That's enough, Eren," Bertholdt growled out, more pleading, more desperate than angry as he squeezed his Titan's fist. "Just stop! There's no point in fighting any-!"

Bertholdt stopped as he felt the form in his hand not only resisting his hand's crushing force but actually pushing back against it!

Then, with a terrible screech, lighting erupted in all directions from the hand of the Colossal Titan, the severed digits and blood raining down from the skies. With them fell the golden reptile, roaring as it fell to Earth.

And all the while, the Colossal Titan screamed, actually screamed in pain as it clutched its ruined hand.

"What the hell?!" Reiner cursed, more alarmed by that than the lightning. Shifters didn't feel pain from injuries to their Titans, so what was going on?

He didn't have time to wonder, as at that moment the three-headed beast landed feet first with a loud and crackling rumble in the ground. With three sets of roars, Reiner found himself being charged once more by his foe. Having no other alternative, he decided to meet the attack head-on. Literally.

The two giants sped towards one another, the impact causing a shockwave to wash over all the spectators.

Reiner had raised both fists to strike at his foe, but he found his strikes countered. By of all things, the jaws of the side-heads, both biting onto his fists and wrestling with them as if they were hands rather than mouths. The strength of the jaws was so strong; he could feel the armor in his hands starting to crack.

"Dammit, Eren," Reiner murmured, raising his head to meet the gaze of the middle head.

His eyes widened in astonishment and fright.

Eren's eyes were no longer the same intense green. They were now a hellish, burning shade of red and orange. As if there was an inferno of madness within those orbs… madness, and hatred.

The middle mouth shot down onto his shoulder, latching on with fangs sinking into his armor. All three heads heaved up, pulling his entire form off the ground briefly and slamming him into the stone ground. He tried to kick and twist himself loose, but it did no good, the lizard pushing and dragging his form against the pavement before holding him against it tightly.

Reiner grunted as he felt it. Actually, truly felt it. Despite it happening to his titan, he felt as though it was his real shoulder being gnarled by the teeth. But that was impossible; shifters didn't experience the pain of their titans. So why did it hurt so damn much!? Why was something starting to burn within him, deep in his spine?!

"What's he doing…?" Armin asked, seeing Eren's chest and neck glow. Almost looked like something was being absorbed from Reiner, with the way the lights pulsed down the throats, akin to swallowing.

Armin started as a shadow passed over him.

"Eren, watch out!" Mikasa called out.

"Look up, you idiot!" Jean screamed.

"The big bastards coming for you!" Connie bellowed.

Eren didn't react to their cries at all, not even as the Colossal loomed over him.

Reiner watched as Bertholdt lifted one of his mighty feet, to bring it down on the three-headed beast. Only now did Eren acknowledge the larger enemy, releasing Reiner to hiss and glare up at the offending Titan. Reiner gathered his strength and half-leaped, half-crawled away to avoid Bertholdt's strike.

There was no way that Eren could just shrug off an impact like that, right? Reiner hoped not, but as he watched over his shoulder, the lack of reaction concerned him.

He narrowed his eyes as he realized that, under the shadow of the Colossal, Eren seemed to be… glowing? A light was forming in his chest and neck. But why?

He didn't have to wonder for long.

Just as the colossal foot came crashing down, the three heads opened their mouths.

From their jaws, a bright and golden death came forth in the form of lightning. It shot through the Colossal's mighty form, the bolt piercing through the foot and exiting out near the knee. With only one leg working and a great bellow of pain, the mighty Colossal Titan fell backward, slumping against the Walls.

"Did Eren just…" Connie whispered, staring on in awe.

"He beat the Colossal!" Sasha cried out as cheers began to be heard around the town.

"Don't get cocky. We still need to get down there and capture him!" Levi ordered, eyeing the battlefield briefly. "Where is our Titan though?"

Meanwhile

Ymir groaned as she awoke, feeling like she had just been rolled over by a starving Sasha running to the mess hall. What had happened? The trial, chained up with Krista in non-fun ways, the scaly bastard is Eren because of course he is, old guy shot their cuffs off, and- Right, she had been flung away by the explosion of the Colossal.

She was still alive though, and still in her Titan. That was… not a bad sign, at least. She took a breath, refocusing on her connection to her Titan, seeing through its gaze once more.

Her Titan had landed in a narrow street, practically an alley far from the battle. Not too surprising. Her Titan was small, and Titans were light to begin with. She just hoped no one up top blasted her the moment she started moving.

She came to a stop as the sound of wood snapping came to her ears, followed by something… more organic, to say the least; The sound of something munching on something else. In her experience, that wasn't good, that meant Titans, pure Titans. Had the wall been breached again?

Still, if it wasn't aware of her, she could get the drop on it without any fuss. With that in mind, she climbed up the side of the building to get sight of her foe.

Only it wasn't a foe, or she hoped not at least.

It was the strange creature that had climbed over the walls, seemingly from nowhere, just to aid her and Eren against the Marlayeans. She was pretty sure she even heard "Marley" but that might be the concussion talking. They had fallen nearby one another, apparently.

More importantly, it was eating something. That "something" wasn't human, but by the golden shine she saw as it gobbled the pieces up, she was pretty sure it was eating chunks of flesh ripped off from Eren at some point.

"Finally awake?"

She started at the voice, the tone tired and wary as the elongated head turned in her direction. "Ally?" she gargled out.

"I saw you with Yeager, so I assume you're not with the dogs," he answered gruffly, a long tongue snapping out to pull in more chunks **. "Otherwise, I would be eating you instead of these."**

Ymir appreciated that. She really, really did. "Why eat?"

"I'm resisting the urge to eat everyone and everything right now," he explained with a groan **. "This'll do for now."**

Ymir frowned though. Eat a Titan? How could that be filling, they just dissolved, right?

The creature cocked its head as Ymir pulled herself free from her nape. "Would this help any?" Ymir called, pointing to her own Titan body.

"… You serious?" he asked incredulously.

"Yeah, I got another left in me. And I think you're worth more in a fight than a spare transformation," Ymir explained with a smirk.

He stared at her for a moment before doing the most human thing possible. He chuckled. **"I appreciate the offer, but save that for saving your skin if you need it."**

Ymir nodded, glancing over her shoulder. She could see the Colossal Titan propped against a wall, and she could hear familiar roars in the distance. "Looks like that blast didn't slow that scaly bastard of ours down," she mused in relief. Fighting the other shifters without Eren would be hard enough, let alone the big guy himself. "So, um, what do I call… whatever your freaky ass is?"

He snorted at her question. **"There isn't a word for what I am, I think. Just call me a Crawler,"** he answered with his version of a shrug, his entire body and tail jerking with the motion. **"As for a name, you first, what's yours?"**

"Ymir," she answered, eyeing the creature as it crawled up on the roof as well.

The Crawler stopped and looked right at her. **"Seriously?"**

"Didn't pick the name, just decided to live with it," she answered bluntly. "Though, you knowing that raises a lot of questions though."

"What, did Yeager not tell you people anything?" he asked in annoyance.

Ymir raised an eyebrow. Did Eren know something she didn't? That'd raise a lot more questions if so. "No, but let's start with your name."

"Name's Grice," he answered, flexing his muscles as he readied to race back to the battle. **"Now come on, let's make sure Yeager hasn't bitten off more than he can chew."**

Meanwhile

When Kenny caught up to Krista, he found her prompt against a building, half sunk to the ground. "What, tired already?" Kenny asked with a dry smirk.

Her lack of answer concerned him. The blond was leaning over, hands on either side of her head, taking deep and labored breaths.

"Kid, what's wrong?" Kenny asked, placing a hand on her shoulder.

Her head snapped up, looking at him with wide, unblinking eyes.

"You can't hear that?!" Krista asked, her voice shuddering.

Kenny cocked an eyebrow. "I can hear'em fighting, same as you."

Krista shook her head forcefully. "Not that, HIM! Eren! You can't… hear him!?"

Kenny frowned. "No, that's not something I can do. What's he sayin?"

Krista shivered, unable to answer as she covered her ears in a futile effort to block it out. To block him out.

Because he wasn't saying anything. He was roaring. And in that roar, Krista could hear so, so many terrible, unnamable desires.

Krista inhaled, slowly looking back up at Kenny. "… What IS he!?"

Kenny frowned. "Your sister would be the one to ask about that."

"… What sister?" Krista asked, blinking. "Wait, do you mean… the girl from my dreams?"

"Probably, knowing her," Kenny answered with a shrug. "Now come on. It's not safe here."

End of Chapter

Well, I think you all know what, or rather, WHO just happened. Won't say much more than that. Also, yes, the Crawler's name is Grice and yes, Krista's past is the same up until a certain point. You're probably all beginning to see some pieces line up by this point.

Also, I feel the need to thank you all. THis fic has 700 reviews now! And over 1.5K in followers and favs! I honestly never thought my Ghidorah-Eren fic would be this popular, but thank you all the same!

Early viewing of chapters 21-22 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 21

God of Hate

Disclaimer: I do NOT own Godzilla or Attack on Titan

The air was filled with cheers and celebration. However premature, it was to be expected. They had just witnessed the defeat of the Colossal Titan by Trips… or rather, Eren.

There wasn't much of a point in that codename anymore, Erwin decided as he watched over the battle. There were few orders to give, little to do. Soldiers on the wall were already moving to try and secure the Colossal Shifter. The Female was still missing after the explosion; he already had scouts looking for her. And the Armor currently had chunks of said armor spraying across the area, courtesy of a strike from Eren's tails.

Still, despite it all, Erwin didn't feel like celebrating. No, more than that, he didn't feel confident in how things had gone. Some instinct in the back of his head screamed that something was wrong with this. Eren's fighting style had changed utterly. Whereas before, it was mostly brute force, now there was something else. Like he knew what he was doing, knew how to fight with that form.

"Commander," a familiar voice called out as someone landed on the same roof as him.

"Petra," he acknowledged. "Has Levi captured the Colossal?"

She shook her head in disappointment. "He wasn't in the nape. The captain thinks he's hiding inside the body as it disappears, waiting for a good chance to flee."

"The area is surrounded," Erwin deduced, not asked. "If the Colossal was capable of that devastation twice in a day, he would have done so already."

"Captain Levi came to the same conclusion," Petra answered. "Orders, sir?"

"Were there any sighting of the Female Titan from the wall?" Erwin inquired.

Petra shook her head. "None I could see. But the… Jaw Titan? Our Shifter is heading back to the battle, with the new creature."

Yes, that was another matter to address. Thankfully, this creature could speak, so hopeful they could obtain some answers from it if they all survived this. "We need to locate the Female Titan."

Petra scowled at that. "Does anyone even know what she looks like?"

"Annie Leonhart. Blond hair, ponytail, blue eyes, about as intimidating as Mikasa."

The two turned to see two members of the 104th approaching them, Jean and Marco, who both saluted.

"I admire your will to help, but you do realize that your comrade is now a traitor, correct?" Erwin asked firmly, eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

"Sir, to be frank? I don't have a damn clue what's going on anymore," Jean remarked, glancing out as Eren bit at the shoulder and wrist of Reiner's arm, trying to either break or tear the limb off while the Armor Titan kept trying to punch his way free. "But yeah, I get they're traitors. And unless we've been kept completely in the dark, everyone else has a lot of questions too. I don't know if Ymir has the answers or not, but if we need even one of these three alive, well…"

Reiner's roar of pain made Jean wince.

"It might be best if we tried to catch Annie before Eren," Marco finished diplomatically.

Erwin couldn't argue with that logic. Nor did he have reason to believe that there were more shifters among the troops. If there had been, they would have struck by now and aided the other three before Eren regained the upper hand.

"Very well. Petra, take these two and gather some scouts to locate Annie Leonhart. Capture her if possible, if not, kill her," Erwin ordered swiftly.

Jean did his best to keep the discomfort off his face. Traitor or not, this situation was hard to process and stomach all at once.

Though, where Annie could be, he had no idea.

Meanwhile

Armin replayed what happened over and over again.

He had dived to get away from the battle, his previous spot crumbling away from the damage Eren and Reiner did to the building.

He landed on another roof nearby. He thought it was sturdy. He thought it was safe to land there.

He had been wrong.

The shingles gave out the moment he landed, sending him to fall off the roof and into an alley.

His lines shot off, catching the side of the building. But he hadn't had time to correct his landing. Instead of his feet landing firmly on the wall, he ended up flung through a window.

When he opened his eyes, he realized a knife was to his throat.

"Armin?"

He recognized that voice anywhere.

"Annie?" he said, a tremble to his voice as they stared at one another.

And that was where they were now; in a dark house, her ready to end his life as they heard and felt the fight going on outside.

"… Make a noise or try anything, and I'll just transform again," she warned in her usual voice of apathy. But it didn't quite reach her eyes.

Armin nodded slowly. "… All three of you have threatened to kill me today," Armin noted idly.

"Then don't press your luck," Annie warmed as she stood back, slowly.

"… Can you at least tell me… why? What this is all about?" Armin asked with a frown.

"We're here to destroy humanity, obviously," Annie said dryly.

"You could have done that in an afternoon at any time," Armin remarked pointedly. "Annie, just tell me, what do you all want? What is the point of all this?"

Annie glanced between Armin and the wall, both of them feeling a particular hard shake in the ground. Eren and Reiner could be fighting mere yards from them, on the other side of the wooden walls.

"… Do you think we were ever really friends, Armin?" Annie asked softly. "Eren clearly gets it. He always got it. He's going to kill all three of us, given the chance."

"… Were you there, at Shinganshina?" Armin asked with a frown. "When our-?"

"I lured the Titans to the wall," Annie answered flatly. "Instead of a stream, I brought a flood of them. Happy?"

Armin flinched, his face morphing into frustration. "I don't understand, why did this all… have to happen?"

Annie kept her guarded gaze on him. "We don't have much choice, Armin."

"Bullshit," Armin remarked, smiling hollowly as Annie raised an eyebrow. "Pretty sure that'd be what Eren would say."

Annie paused before continuing. "True. I'm sure Bertholdt or Reiner would bullshit you or give you some sob story. The truth is that we want to go home, Armin."

"And to do that, you have to kill us?" Armin asked incredulously.

"The sick irony isn't lost on me," Annie said with a frown.

"… Just, just answer me this much," Armin said with a sigh. "About Eren-"

"Haven't the slightest idea," Annie preempted.

Armin was almost surprised by the bluntness but took the answer for what it was. "I don't suppose there is a chance I could convince you to join our side?"

"… Are you being serious, or just stalling me?" Annie asked idly.

"Both," Armin admitted with a shrug. "But you already knew that."

Annie didn't react, knowing they both understood what was going on. "About as much chance of you joining us," Annie remarked.

"Didn't think so," Armin said with a small, fake smile.

With nothing left worth saying, the room became silent.

Too silent.

They both realized it at once. There were no more vibrations on the ground, no more roars or crashes from outside.

Tension filled the air, their stalemate becoming more and more uncertain. If the battle had ended, it was likely in Eren's victory. But where was the commotion? The cheers? The sounds of soldiers scrambling to capture Reiner and search for Annie? Even Eren's lightest steps should cause some-

The floor shook for an instant, serving as their only warning before the roof came crashing down, a mass of gold smashing through.

Armin was saved, but only barely as he jumped to the side, rolling so that his side impacted with the wall. Eren's head and teeth were right next to him, not even half a meter from him.

"What the hell?!" a loud voice called from up top.

Looking skyward as Eren ripped his head out, Armin could see that on top of the building was Ymir's Titan.

"Yeager, snap out of it, she's with us, right?!" another mountainous voice roared, the same one from the creature that came over the wall.

Looking across the room, Armin saw that Annie had made her escape from the commotion. With a frown, he used his gear to come out and land on the roof.

"Eren, what's wrong!?"

And blinked as he realized he was right behind his still-human childhood friend. "Mikasa?"

"Armin?" Mikasa returned in surprise as she looked back at him. "What are you-?"

"Annie was here, a moment ago," he informed, making Mikasa tense.

That matter, however, was put on hold as they heard the rushing of enormous feet. They looked just in time to see the golden beast rushing forward and leaping up on the building. It made the jump, but Eren's immense weight tore through the wooden construct, all the while trying to get at Ymir, who kept leaping out of his reach.

The two-legged newcomer, thankfully, was keeping the very injured Reiner occupied. The protective layer of the Armor Titan was in ruins, fractures all over as pieces fell away the more he struggled against the monster whose tail held him by the neck and continued to keep him wrestled to the ground.

"What's going on!? Did Ymir attack Eren?" Armin asked in alarm, looking at the scene uncertainly.

"No! I don't know! She showed back up and Eren just attacked her," Mikasa answered.

Armin narrowed his eyes as he took Eren in. His friend was acting with a single-minded, almost blind rage. None of the other soldiers were sure what to do anymore, watching the battle in confusion. No one was sure if Ymir and the mysterious creature were allies now or foes.

"Everyone! Stay away from the Golden Bastard!"

Both looked up to see a familiar scout landing nearby. "Section Commander?" Armin greeted in surprise.

"Armin, Mikasa,' she greeted in relief, eyeing Eren's form cautiously. "Listen to me, there isn't much time. That's not Eren right now."

Both of them inhaled sharply at that. "What do you mean?" Armin asked in worry.

"Think about it," Hange said. "He lost all of his heads… all three brains. He might have regrown them, but who knows how much he's gotten back."

"Are you saying that on top of everything, Eren has amnesia?" Mikasa asked in disbelief.

"No, I'm saying he's working purely on instincts for the moment," Hange reiterated. "He's basically fighting in his sleep."

The idea of Eren fighting in his sleep seemed far too believable to Armin. "Section Commander, how can you be sure-"

"'Just trust me, I am sure," Hange said swiftly, a deadly serious look in her eyes. "I don't have time to explain. Just that we need to wake Eren up before he hurts someone."

Mikasa set herself into a determined look. "What do we need-"

"Wait," Armin said suddenly. "Annie was just here."

"What?" Hange asked in alarm.

"She was hiding in this building," Armin explained, looking at Mikasa. "Mikasa, I'll try and get through to Eren. You need to help the others deal with Annie."

"But-!" Mikasa started before Hange put a hand on her shoulder.

"He's right. The Female Titan might strike the moment Eren has an opening," she instructed. "Armin, are you sure you can get through to Eren?"

"We don't have much choice but to try," Armin said with a frown. "At best case, like this, Eren will only kill someone by accident. But if this state sees humans as enemies…"

That grim notion sat over their heads.

"Mikasa, go. I'll help Armin," Hange prompted, the Ackerman reluctantly nodding, taking off on her ODM gear. "So… any ideas?"

"Just one," Armin remarked uneasily. "You're… sure Eren's still in there?"

Normally, Armin would have no issue believing that, but Hange pointing out that Eren had to, somehow, "regenerate" his very own memories had made him a bit worried. He didn't know that much about biology, let alone the brain, but it still sounded… strange, to put it lightly.

"Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure," Hange said with a distracted look before refocusing her attention.

"Then yeah, I have one idea," Armin admitted reluctantly.

-break-

He was flying.

How was he flying? Since when?

No, wait. He… he could always fly. Fly further, farther than any could imagine, beyond darkness and light.

Yes, yes he had always been able to fly.

He had always been Free.

He flew over vast waters of violet, under a scarlet sky with two orange suns.

He flew over endless blue sands that gave way to mountains as clear as glass.

He flew over it all… but to where was he flying? Was there even a "where" or just endless horizons?

He was fine with either, but still, he wondered. Where was he going? And where did he come from?

He landed, the barren earth trembling before his mighty form, his three-fold gaze surveying it all.

The ground rumbled more, and it was not him this time.

A challenger had come, an enemy to slay.

From beneath his feet, came a worm; a pathetic, insolent worm that was less than his tails. With feeble fangs and brittle spikes, it dared to attack him.

He growled, more annoyed than angry, for there was no pain. No injury. Only the irritating poking against his glistening scales.

He looked about himself, three heads considering how to dispose of this meager foe.

Impulsive as ever, Left lounged down and bit into the wretch. He ripped it from its dwelling and Right joined by biting into the middle, rippling the creature asunder, its thin and verdant blood coating their fangs and scales.

Middle paid little heed to the acts of his fellow heads, turning his gaze skyward. Dark clouds were coming on the horizon, and the winds growing.

Good. Soon it would all be over.

[[[[Wait. What will be over…?]]]]

Their time here, of course. What else? All they needed was to Finish The Storm.

[[[[Finish the storm?]]]]

Then we will destroy them all. All of our enemies will be gone.

Yes, of course, that was right. How could he forget?

His hated enemies.

The giants. Furless, skinless, mindless.

Maggots upon our power!

Traitors, false friends.

Bloated, over-gorged maggots.

Who else could be his enemies? How many others?

Perhaps it was better to just Kill Them All.

[[[[… Maybe. I-]]]]

"EREN!" A voice called out through the heavens and the distant rumbling thunder.

Insolent pest!

There was something on his nose. A creature. It was like The Enemies, but much smaller.

But some of the Enemies could become smaller.

Yellow at the head, blue in the eyes, furless skin all else that wasn't covered.

[[[[What… who is that?]]]]

Another maggot to crush!

But where had it come from? It had no wings to fly?

No wings… to fly?

When did he get his own wings?

"Eren! Listen! You have to snap out of it!" the creature yelled out.

[[[[Eren? Is that what we're called?]]]]

Yes, it is what they call us. A useless title that they might give to their Golden Demise.

But why was this thing looking into his eye like that? Why was it so familiar?

"Remember who you are! Why you fight so damn hard! You're not just some wild animal, I know you're not!" it called out to him desperately.

He could crush it, bite it, tear it to shred. He should. He would!

[[[[No, wait, I can't do that!]]]]

Why not?

[[[[Because he's-!]]]]

"Eren! If you keep going like this, they're going to escape!"

He's what?

What is going on? Why are we hesitating?

"Are you really going to let them get away with what they did!? To our home!? To your mother?!"

[[[[… Get out of my head]]]]

The Storm grew heavy overhead with rage.

-break-

Armin was crouched on the nose of the middle head. He had one of his swords jammed between the scales. Not enough to pierce the

surface, that was beyond him, but it did keep him steady.

"You're Eren Yeager, dammit! And I know that whatever is going on, it is nothing you can't beat," Armin said, his face caught in some mess between a scowl of frustration and worry and a knowing smile.

There was a brief, heavy silence as those red eyes stared into him. All the eyes, as all three heads were fixated on him. The middle looked unmoved, angry still. He looked to his left and saw that Eren's right head had a strained, confused look on its face, the slit pupils widening and narrowing. He looked to his right and saw that the left head…

Armin gasped in shock and relief as he watched the hellish colors bleed from those eyes, revealing familiar and vibrant greens.

The middle head growled, and that was the only warning Armin had before he was flung into the air. To Armin's horror, the middle head tried to snap forth and eat him. But to his confused relief, the right head's eyes suddenly snapped to green, roaring as it bit into the middle head's neck, pulling it away with a pained and outraged roar. The left head stretch out, using its tongue to grab Armin out of the sky before leaning as far away from the quarreling heads as he could.

"Eren?" Armin called in shock, getting a grunt of confirmation before the head placed him down on a building and the tongue released its grip.

With Armin safe, Drei's demeanor turns to wrath as it turned back to the fight between Eins and Middle. Eins continued to hold him steady, even as Middle roared before biting into Eins's neck and trying to dislodge him. Drei, snarled, reaching forth to bite just below the head. Middle growled and roared in indignation.

Hate bellowed with Eren's chest, a glow starting to rise within it, and Drei could taste the Golden Death building in his throat.

Middle glared with indignation before it suddenly ceased to struggle, its eyes fading to green as well.

-break-

He glared up at the great Storm overhead and knew it was returning the gaze just as hatefully. Without eyes or body, it was staring at him with enough wrath to shake the heavens.

And Eren did not care.

With a mighty, hateful roar, he bellowed into the Storm and the Storm roared back with thunder that would smite gods and winds that would tear down mountains.

Louder and louder did their roars echo, the world trembling before the Dragon and the Storm, as if they might break under the weight of their hate and anger.

And in fact, the world did break.

The strange world around Eren shattered, falling away like shards of glass, the fragments grinding into dust of lights as even the Storm vanished.

In place of that world, was… something else.

A vast realm of sands under an endless sky of stars.

[[[[I… I know this place…]]]]

The strange nostalgia, the feeling of memories just beyond his reach, was brought to a halt as he felt the light upon his scales.

Eren turned to face it and saw the source.

A tree… a tree that glowed as an entity of pure blue light. With no wind, its branches swayed strangely about itself, as if alive.

It was massive, yet it was puny.

Was Eren looking up at the Tree? Or looking down on it? He couldn't tell. It felt like it loomed over him and, at the same time, he dwarfed it. Why was it both? How was it both?

The wind rushed against his mighty form, bringing his gaze skyward. Above the Tree, the Storm formed once more, even in this place. No, not just loomed, but circled it. As if to strike the tree down, to claim the tree.

But even with the blackest of clouds, their darkness did not obstruct the stars above.

Eren had no idea what he was doing anymore. There was no thought, no plan here; only instinct and the knowledge that this Storm had almost brought him to harm Armin of all people.

Only instinct, and only hate.

Thus, with a single wave of wings he did not have, Eren scattered the Storm, the clouds flung from far from the Tree.

This time.

Why Eren had that impression, he did not know, but he did.

And as the Storm scattered, a single word of ire reached Eren's mind.

{{{{Whelp}}}}

End of Chapter

… Yeah, you all can guess who that is. Next chapter will wrap up the fight, if it can be called that still, and we can move on to everyone finally getting some answers.

Not much else to say. Hope you all enjoyed this bit. Until next time!

Early viewing of chapters 22-23 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 22

God of Hate

Annie knew a golden chance when she saw one. She didn't know what caused Eren to start attacking Ymir, and she frankly didn't care.

With all the chaos going on, she made a rush for Reiner and the weird creature ensnaring him. She delivered a slice to the tail and was surprised by how well it cut into the beast.

"What did that?!" Grice roared as his tail unfurled instinctively, snapping his jaw around as he searched for the new foe.

"Reiner, now!" Annie yelled, looking right into his Titan's eye as she flew by.

"The Bitch," Grice growled, trying to swipe her out of the air, but Annie escaped by centimeters.

Reiner took the opening, punching the Crawler in the head. It did little damage against the hard skull, but it did knock his foe off him for a moment.

Grice snarled as he saw the Armored Titan rise once more, looking ready to fight again despite everything. With a bestial screech, Grice leaped forward and tackled the Titan to the ground.

But the moment they made impact with the ground, he recognized that the body was limp in his grip and hissing steam was starting to rise from it.

"Cowards!" he cursed, raising his head to bellow out over the city. **"The Dogs are trying to escape! They're heading for the wall!"**

"You heard him!" Rico called out to the soldiers on the wall. "Everyone with a blade, watch for anyone attempting to approach!

Do Not Let Them Escape!"

Anticipation rumbled in Grice's throat and chest as he leaped atop the nearest building, crushing a piece of ceiling in his grasp as his eyes scoured the walls for any sign of them.

Normally, he'd expect them to go somewhere less defended. But the shifters couldn't just abandon the Colossal Titan like that. But they weren't stupid… spent and desperate, but not stupid. If they could, they'd make an opening or wait for one to-

Lightning rained down from the heavens.

Grice turned around to see Yeager being struck by it. But of course, it did no damage, coursing over and through him, as Yeager let loose a mighty roar.

It was not a scream or a call, there were no words. It was a primal roar of fury and defiance. As the lightning subsided, so did his roar and so did the storm.

Grice felt like smirking as he saw the green eyes of Yeager **. "Looks like he got his heads in order."**

His good mood evaporated as another lightning strike came down, causing him to look up at the wall.

Just as he expected, Yeager's light show had distracted everyone just long enough for the Marleyian Dogs to make their move. The Female Titan was on top of the Wall. Her transformation killed or scattered those that could stop her. She was about to jump onto the other side and make a run for it, her allies no doubt on her Titan's body.

They might just get away today.

He saw her body tense, prepared to jump down.

And once more, lighting danced across the sky. But this lightning didn't fall, nor did it rise. Three beaming bolts became as one and shot straight through the Female titan's right shoulder, severing her arm from her body, and forcing her to let out a horrendous screech. The limb fell with a clenched fist, Annie futilely trying to grab it before it fell.

Her blue eyes shot up, looking past all else and straight to Yeager.

His chest and necks began to glow once more with ominous energy.

Annie flung herself over the opposite side of the wall as fast as she could.

Bertholdt knew several bones had cracked or even broke by the end of that fall. By some mercy, he hadn't landed head first while still held in the fist.

"Dammit," he cursed, feeling the heat of the steam against his skin while he pushed the large finger off, crawling his way out.

"Dammit!" he cursed again, his entire body in pain while slowly healing. He stood and checked his gear but realized Annie's grip and the fall had damaged them beyond use, his hooks bent and at least one of his gas tanks was cracked open.

"Dammit all, it wasn't supposed to go like this," he muttered desperately, feeling the rumbling in the ground and hearing the zipline in the air. The crash gave him some cover, the steam and dust covering the area.

But what options did he have now? The wall behind him blocked him, towering over him all the more now that he couldn't use his ODM gear. The houses nearby? That'd save him for a few minutes at best, they'd search them for sure. Not to mention, hiding wasn't easy with his size.

He could… he could transform again…

He clutched his hand as he remembered the feeling of his hand exploding, and one knee grew weak at the memory of those lightning beams tearing through his leg.

He couldn't explode again, that was off the table. And it didn't help at all the first time. But he could… he could try and fight. Kick the boulder through the wall and escape in the confusion.

But that pain, that terrible pain. He had never felt pain like that before. He never felt any pain from his Titan before! There was the pain from the wound to trigger the transformation and the pain from overusing his powers, but his Titan's own injuries? Those never hurt. So what was-

A low roar and a harsh snap of jaws drew his attention. To his left, he could see the strange shape of the Crawler climbing along the roofs.

The sound of rocks falling made him snap around in alarm to the opposite direction, seeing the Jaw Titan lurking up at the wall, watching him cautiously.

Heavy footsteps brought his numb gaze down the road before him, heavy with smoke. Closer and louder they got, but still, he could not see his final and truest foe.

Then, it stopped and all fell into silence. No one moved, and Bertholdt couldn't even breathe.

With three great breaths, the dust of debris was blown away, and Bertholdt was staring down the six eyes of Eren, each head low to the ground, their fangs bared and their eyes filled with hate.

Cold sweat crept up his spine, and he felt his hand and leg throb with steady, repeating pulses of pain.

He'd have to fight. He was injured enough to trigger his transformation. There was no other way, he'd have to try.

But something stopped him.

Because he realized too late that Eren wasn't looking at him anymore.

All he felt was a hand touch his spine before something sparked in his very soul, pain overwhelming him. Before he could even scream, he collapsed into unconsciousness, falling hard to the ground.

"Not today, Bertholdt Hoover," Frieda said while staring down at the shifter, her scarred hand still outstretched.

She shifted her sights onto the hulking form of Eren, whose three heads eyed her suspiciously.

[[[[You have a lot to explain.]]]]]

Frieda just chuckled under his scrutiny, however tired she might look and feel.

"I think that's true for all of us, Yeager," Grice said, cocking his head from his perch on the building next to the dragon.

Eren rose himself up, each head looking at the creature with different flavors of confusion.

"I don't know what the golden brat said," Levi said as he landed in front of Frieda, eyes narrowed. "But I'm going to assume he's wondering the same thing I am."

"Unfortunately, I can't explain just yet," Frieda said apologetically.

"And just why is that?" Levi asked, rather tired of this routine.

Frieda idly grabbed her crippled arm. "Because it seems I pushed this old injury a bit too much."

Levi grimaced as Frieda collapsed to her knees. He grabbed her before she hit the ground completely, awkwardly holding her up.

Checking her vitals, he didn't find any signs that she was faking it or about to die.

He looked to the side as he saw Ymir's Titan climb down, the freckled girl pulling herself out of the spine. "Is it finally over?" she asked, exasperated but hopeful.

"For now, yeah," Levi answered, wondering just what Ymir would do now.

"Good," she said, pulling herself out of the titan fully, bracing herself as it collapsed and began to dissolve. "Seeing as my trial was interrupted, I'll just play it safe and turn myself in."

Levi grunted but didn't deny that point.

"Where is everyone anyway?" Ymir asked idly, glancing around at the distinct lack of soldiers in the area.

"Holding back, in case he transformed again," Levi answered, nodding to Bertholdt. "Any idea what she did to him?"

"I have a good hunch," Ymir answered with a frown. "I think you do too."

Levi remained silent at that.

[What are they talking about?]

[[No idea.]]

[[[Someone better fill us in later.]]]

"I still don't know how you put up with that, let alone with three heads," Grice commented with a head shake. *"Yeager, you ever figure out what happens if we eat one of the Nine?"*

Eins became rather dumbfounded at that while Zwei became very curious. Drei, however…

[Do I know you…?]

"Ummm, it's me? Grice?" the Crawler asked, gesturing to his head. **"I know my face has seen better days, Yeager, but I still remember your gilded ass."**

"Wait a minute," Levi said, looking up at Grice while pointing to Eren. "You know the golden brat?"

However, Grice looked between Eren and Levi several times before settling on the golden figure. "Yeager, did this kid just call you a brat?"

Ymir looked between the three awkwardly before summing up the situation as best as could. "I think there's been a big fucking misunderstanding here."

Later

Somehow, the entire thing felt anticlimactic to Jean.

"Any idea what they'll do with him?" he asked with crossed arms, frowning as he watched the grim and nervous soldiers taking the unconscious and restrained form of Bertholdt away.

"What can they do?" Connie asked, scratching his head. "I mean, what stops him from just transforming again to escape?"

"If Ymir is on our side, maybe she told them how?" Marco suggested uncertainly.

"I'm more confused by… that," Sasha said as she, unlike the rest of them, was staring in the opposite direction… more specifically, at the rather giant creature.

Commanders Erwin and Pixis, among others, had gathered near the breach to talk with the newcomer. Among them was even Ymir.

"How many things like Eren are there?" Jean asked with a scowl. "There's no way that this thing showed up by chance."

"Yeah, and what was he calling Reiner and the others? Dogs of Gnarly or something?" Connie asked in bewilderment.

"And why does it talk…?" Sasha asked, sounding almost disturbed by that fact alone.

Meanwhile, the discussion had taken on an interesting turn.

[[[[My name is Eren.]]]]

"Eren? Okay, I get needing a new name, but why the Owl's?" Grice asked in confusion.

[[[[What does an owl have to do with it…?!]]]]

"Yeager, start talking sense or I'm bashing all three of your heads!" Grice warned in annoyance **. "And how did you even get a third head?!"**

Eren blinked as all three heads glanced at each other. Turning their attention back to Grice, they silently rose to their full height, towering far over the bipedal.

"… Yeah, yeah, rub it in," Grice grumbled under the obvious intimidation tactic.

"So, this is going well," Hange remarked in thought. They all understood only Grice's side of the conversation, but they still felt like they were following it well enough.

"Hey, Eyebrows, Baldy? Where's Krista? Shouldn't she be here to play translator?" Ymir reminded with a scowl.

"Sadly, Cadet Lenz hasn't been located," Pixis remarked with a hum. "But weren't you last seen with her?"

"…" Ymir suddenly looked very concerned. "I left her with someone, an old creep that works with that Frieda lady."

Erwin furrowed his brows as he looked at the shifter dubiously. "You of all people left her with an unknown party?"

"He had ODM gear and they knew each other somehow," Ymir answered with a shrug. "And, you know, I had to in case Eren got his scaly ass handed to him."

As the two giants had stopped their bickering to listen to the conversation, Eins growled above her while Drei gave a noise that might have been thanks.

"If, you blockhead, IF," Ymir repeated with a weak glare.

"So, once again, Frieda has all the answers," Levi remarked. "I don't like this."

"Neither do I, but we best deal with the more immediate issue," Hange said as she stepped forward. "Hey, you! Big guy with the Handsome Skull!"

"… Me…?" Grice asked in bewilderment.

[[[[You get used to it. Mostly.]]]]

"Yeah, Eren? Just give me a few minutes with him, okay?" Hange requested, getting a snort of acceptance. She then looked up at Grice with a wide grin. "So, you know the Beautiful Bastard here?" she asked, jabbing her thumb at Eren.

Grice reared back in surprise as he stared at the strange woman **. "Are… That… I'm sorry, but are you his new wife or something?!"**

Eins, Zwei, and Drei made great efforts to not react or respond to that inquiry, taking deep breaths through the noses.

"Oh, how flattering," Hange said with a grin, pretending to swoon. "Sadly no, I am still single."

Grice looked to Eren again. **"I'm not sure if I'm feeling respect or disappointment,"** he said before looking to Hange. **"Yes, I know Yeager. Not sure why he's acting like we never met. Does he have amnesia or something? Please tell me he doesn't."**

"No, nothing like that," Hange answered. "Now, when you say Yeager, you know him as…?"

"Grisha Yeager?" Grice answered bluntly.

[[[[MY FATHER?!]]]]

Grice recoiled back as every human covered their ears from Eren's startled roar. **"Father!? What!?"** Grice repeated in surprise, and a flash of anger roiled through his body as he stared at the three-headed beast before letting it slip away **. "Wait, but… Eren? So, you're not Zeke?"**

[[[[Who The Hell Is Zeke!?]]]]

Eren didn't know how he was more confused right now than when he had been trying to figure out HOW he became a three-headed monster, but here he was, utterly stupefied by what this "Grice" was saying.

Grice growled in annoyance as he suddenly understood, balancing on his tail to wipe a hand over his snout. " **I'm sorry, it's just… that form. He was…"**

Eren's body relaxed into a state of curious disbelief.

"You mean that Eren's father could turn into this creature too?" Hange called up in interest.

"Yeah. He was the only one that could. Most turned out more like… me," Grice said with an unsettling pause.

There was a story there, but Hange decided that was something to dig into later. "Eren, just for the record, you didn't kn-?" Hange continued, immediately getting very rapid headshakes. "Yeah, I didn't think so."

"Wait, Grisha never told you anything? Anything at all" Grice said with a troubled tone, getting the same answer from Eren. **"What the hell, Grisha!?"**

Eren seconded, third, and fourthed that sentiment.

"It would appear that we have many things to clear up," Erwin stated, eyeing Grice pointedly. "Grice, correct? Tell us, why are you here exactly? Your arrival seems to be too good to be a coincidence."

"I could…" ***hear*** **" his call,"** Grice said, motioning his head to Eren.

Everyone noticed his hesitation in the word "hear" but didn't ask for an elaboration.

"I thought Grisha needed some help. Seemed like I was right when I heard the Dogs of Marley picking a fight with him," Grice explained. **"I was wondering why he didn't answer back. I was sure he was on the other side of that rock."**

[[[[I was. Just… thought you were an enemy.]]]]

Grice shook his head at the absolute mess this was all turning out to be.

"You keep using that word," Levi stated with a frown. "What the hell is Marley?"

Grice seemed to be stunned for a moment before shaking it off. **"Right. The Owl did tell us something about this, all those years ago,"** Grice said solemnly, turning his gaze to Ymir **. "Why haven't *you* told them anything?"**

"Let's just say I was in a bit of a bind over if I should help them or not. One that Frieda cleared up," Ymir remarked.

"So someone did sneak in that night Hange's pets were attacked," Levi stated knowingly.

"Yeah, same creep with Krista," Ymir answered with a shrug.

"Wait," Hange said, rounding on Ymir to glare dangerously at her. "Are you telling me someone attacked Sean and Bean just to talk to you!?"

Ymir leaned away uncomfortably, a bit intimidated by the crazy scientist.

"I believe we should address that later," Pixis said with a chuckle as he attempted to be diplomatic. "Satisfy an old geezer's curious mind, Grice. Were you once a human, like Eren here?"

"Yes, I was?" Grice answered, almost finding the question surprising. All the same, he noticed Eren leaning in with keen interest.

"Then perhaps you might be willing to tell us if there is a way to revert to human form?" the commander asked with a wry smile.

"Turning back? It's possible. But Grisha was the only one who figured it out," Grice explained unhappily. **"Either he ran off without telling me or I wasn't in a good state to talk to."**

[[[[Good state?]]]]

Hange echoed Eren's question, prompting Grice to grow uncomfortable **. "Unlike Grisha… and Eren, I suppose… I have to eat. If I don't, well, I'll lose control. Thankfully, eating Titans somehow works."**

"That is… fascinating," Hange said, her body buzzing with excitement.

"And annoying," Grice said, suddenly groaning, his tail curling and shaking.

Eren eyed Grice warily as he heard a growl- not from Grice's mouth, but from his stomach.

"Grice?" Hange asked cautiously, backing away just a step.

"I'm fine," Grice assured as the hunger pang passed. **"But I have to leave soon and hunt some. That fight took a lot out of me."**

[[[[Are you going after Annie and Reiner?]]]]

"The shifters?" Grice asked, noticing the wrath was still fresh in Eren's tone ***. "No, not yet. I'll need to feed before I can catch up with them, and I'd rather not try fighting them as a mindless beast."***

"Thank you for the aid, all the same," Erwin stated. "Should I trust you'll be back?

Grice nodded. **"In the meantime, get the Jaw here and that woman to explain what's really going on outside the walls."**

"Trust us, we will," Levi said, giving Ymir a sideways glare.

The Jaw Titan shifted awkwardly but made no denial.

Grice looked to Eren, who obviously had a million and one questions for him still **. "When I come back, we'll talk about your father."**

[[[[… Is he dead?]]]]

Grice paused, about to start scaling the wall, before looking to Eren. **"He passed that power on to you. I can't imagine he did that and just left you to fend for yourself."**

Eren bowed his heads; Eins gritted his teeth in grief, Zwei bore his sorrow silently, while Drei just tried to come to terms with that

revelation as he gained an unfocused gaze.

With nothing else to say, Grice leaped up to the wall, his claws digging as he began to scale up the large structure.

The humans backed away, watching for any falling debris. "Levi, go up and make sure no one attacks him."

"Right," Levi said as he ascended after Grice.

Eren just watched the climbing Crawler with a touch of envy in his eyes.

As Grice reached the top, several humans backed away uneasily. **"Easy, just passing through,"** he assured half-heartedly. He stopped as he reached the edge, looking out over the lands beyond this wall.

He took it all in, the sun upon the green fields and small forests, the sights of abandoned buildings, the wind rushing over him, and so much more.

"Gods, that's a great view," he said, taking a whiff of the clear air. But with it, he caught another scent.

Yeager's. It was faint, but it was up here, or on something up here.

Turning and alarming the soldiers, he spied two young soldiers, basically children. One was blond, but the other was black haired and had to have blood from Hiruzu. They both tensed as he faced them and sniffed again. Unless he was wrong, it was coming from the red scarf on the girl's neck.

Friends of Eren's, he was sure. Still… did that mean that Grisha's son was this young too?

"What were you thinking, Grisha?" he muttered before going over the side, sliding down with his claws against the wall.

"What was that about?" Armin wondered as he watched Grice leap off the wall and head off to parts unknown. "And did he say…?"

"Grisha. Eren's father," Mikasa said with a frown, looking down at the other side of the wall, down at Eren and the others. "I think things just got even more complicated, Armin.

Meanwhile, all heads turned to Ymir with expectant looks.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll spill. Just, where do you want to do this? We just going to stand here next to the boulder?" Ymir asked bluntly.

Deeming that a fair point, Erwin nodded. "We'll take stock of the casualties and everyone's condition. Then, once we have everyone present, you will tell us all you can."

"Just for the record, my information is probably really outdated. I mean, really outdated," Ymir cautioned.

Pixis chuckled at that. "You make it sound as if you're a hundred years old."

"Eh. Closer to eighty," Ymir answered bluntly.

Hange turned to her in shock, the others giving Ymir strange looks. "Are you… immortal or something? Is that a Titan perk?"

"I wish," Ymir grumbled. "Trust me, it's nothing good. Just… get your notebook ready, I have a lot to tell. I'm sure the bonehead and Frieda can explain the rest."

"Ymir," Erwin spoke up. "What does Frieda have to do with you trusting us?"

Ymir considered how to answer that for a moment before shrugging. "Your king is a lie. Frieda's the real person in charge."

Needless to say, that startled most of them, Erwin's eyes narrowing. "How do you know that that king is a fake?"

"I think you already guessed on that," Ymir noted pointedly. "Especially after what she just did to the Colossal."

Eren frowned, feeling very out of the loop on something extremely important.

The King being a figurehead and Frieda being the real Queen? That didn't affect him really. But what did that have to do with what she did to Bertholdt?

Glancing up and seeing Eren's confusion, Ymir looked to Hange in surprise. "Wait, did you **not** tell him everything I told you guys about the Shifters?"

Eren's gaze wasn't accusing, but he was clearly annoyed as he focused on Hange.

"In my defense, we were still unsure if she was lying to us at the time," Hange explained apologetically to her favorite subject to study.

"Seems we all have a lot of catching up to do," Pixis mused. "Shall I suggest that Trips remains close by when we all sit down and talk? It seems best to only have to tell this information once before we decide what to do with it."

Eren nodded and, with care not to accidentally hit anyone, turned to walk off somewhere, his heads and back slumping in obvious exhaustion.

"Poor guy. He must be exhausted after all that," Hange remarked sympathetically.

"Found out his friends are traitors and he had to regrow his own heads?" Ymir mused sourly. "That alone you need a drink for."

"I'd share mine, but I doubt it'd help," Pixis joked.

Eren ignored the talking behind him, their voices growing fainter with every step. He inevitably came to one side of Trost. There were

soldiers everywhere, but this had little activity and no injured lying about. Without hesitation, he laid his massive body down with a rather loud thud. Not caring if he alarmed anyone, he allowed sleep to claim him.

But even now, it was still in the back of his mind.

The glow of that tree in that vast sea of sand.

The feeling of wind beneath wings he did not have.

The Voice of the Storm, taunting and goading him.

{{{{Whelp}}}}

End of Chapter

And, fights over. They got Bertholt, Annie and Reiner are on the run, and the answers are FINALLY coming out for everyone to hear.

But yeah, Grice has been under he assumption that Eren was Grisha this whole time. Also, yes, this is canon- Skulcrawlers are perpetually starving due to a hypermetabolism.

Not much else ot say. Hope you all enjoyed the fight, I treid not to drag it out.

Early viewing of chapters 23-24 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 23

Chapter 23

He wasn't in that land of sand this time. Nor was he looking out on some stranger world, filled with beasts to fight.

Instead, he was in a storm.

No, he was in The Storm.

A cyclone of clouds and rain spiraled around him, within the very eye of event.

But he wasn't… standing in it. It was like he was flying yet not. Without being able to see the ground below or the sky above, he had no idea if he was moving or just hovering in place.

Despite it all, he found it hard to care, even as thunder rumbled all about.

[[[[What do you want?]]]]

His voices, three as one, echoed out into a spinning storm wall. Because he knew, somehow he knew, just What and Who was there with him, in this storm.

Lightning flashed brightly, illuminating a figure. Its shape was like Eren's own shadow. But one far more massive.

And, most importantly, with wings.

{{{{I am The Storm.}}}}

[[[[I know… I know.]]]]

Eren wasn't sure what he knew, just that he knew it. And what he knew was that this form, this power… it belonged to someone else. Something else.

And The Storm was that owner.

{{{{We must slaughter the maggots.}}}}

Maggots. Titans. Yes, that was what they were to him, Him, the both of them. Yet…

[[[[Why?]]]]

For what offense could maggots pay The Storm?

Eren flinched back as a thousand, a million thunderbolts echoed all at once. Loud enough to shake the very earth to its core and raddle its interior.

And above that was a more terrible noise.

The roar of The Storm.

{{{{Too long have have feasted so greedily.}}}}

Eren couldn't agree more.

{{{{We will kill them all.}}}}

They wanted the same thing, him and The Storm.

And yet still…

The winds calmed ever so slightly and Eren could feel this… entity drawing closer.

Shadows and clouds blew before him, taking on the misty likeness of a human standing before a large, two-legged creature.

'You mean that Eren's father could turn into this creature too?' *Hange's echoed in the winds.*

'Yeah. He was the only one that could,' *Grice's answer came faintly.*

Eren glared at The Storm.

[[[[What Happened To My Father?]]]]

There was a low rumble at his demanded question and Eren didn't know what it meant. Disappointment? Interest? He had no idea. Just that The Storm knew exactly what he was talking about.

The mist dispersed and reformed to take the very defined appearance of Frieda Riess.

{{{{The Maggot Queen.}}}}

Meanwhile

Eren's eyes snapped open, a cold chill up the spines of his neck.

He was on the ground, he could feel it beneath his scales. He wasn't fighting, nothing was attacking him, and there wasn't any pain. There was no wall of clouds, no strange voice, and no thunder.

Everything was fine. For now at least.

"Eren?"

He turned to see Mikasa, who was waking from her own nap on Eins's head. Said head wasn't exactly pleased, but he was not angry about that fact.

That didn't mean he approved though.

[Idiot! That's no place to sleep!]

[[That couldn't have been comfortable.]]

[[[Why that head?]]]

Zwei gave Drei a pointed look while Eins made every effort not to move with Mikasa sitting on him.

"Sorry," Mikasa said, covering a small yawn as she looked up at the two heads. "They wanted me to show you where to go when you woke up. I wasn't sure how long you'd be."

Eren was unanimously sure that Mikasa demanded that task. Still, his eyes drifted around, trying to spot any of the other cadets.

"Everyone is fine," Mikasa promised as she leaped off the head, landing on the stone road and giving him a reassuring smile. "Thanks to you."

Eren wasn't sure if he agreed with that as he looked around, eyes lingering on the large crater formed by Bertholdt's transformation, and the cracks in the wall where the Colossal Titan had collapsed.

He could still taste it in his tongues. It looked like Lightning and it felt like Power, but the taste of it was not something Eren had a word for. He didn't think there was a word for it.

"We have Bertholdt," Mikasa said with a frown. "I don't know where, but…"

Eren nodded, fully understanding her. Hopefully, the traitor was secured, locked up somewhere, and unable to transform.

Without another word, he rose to his feet once more. He could hear everyone reacting to that, mainly just calls of "Look, he's awake!" or something to that effect.

"Did he get bigger?"

He glanced down quizzically at Mikasa, who suddenly realized she said that out loud.

"Follow me," Mikasa said, hoping he hadn't heard her, and took off on her ODM gear to land on a nearby roof.

They walked in relative silence as Eren shrugged off the aches in his limbs. He wasn't sure if it was the fighting in general or regrowing his heads, but he had some terrible stiffness in his necks now.

Regrowing his heads… how did he do that? Titans could do that sure, but judging by Ymir and the traitors, there wasn't actually anything like a brain in the heads. He knew he had brains in each skull, especially after Annie had stabbed one of his through the eyes.

And the brain was both important and delicate. With a doctor for a father, that wasn't hard to pick up on. He was sure he should have some memory loss, but if he did, it wasn't obvious. He remembered everything of note since the Battle of Trost, and everything before that. If anything was missing, he couldn't notice anything obvious. His mother, his father, Hannes, everybody from training…

… Everyone in his team that died, beside Armin and himself.

"We're here."

Her voice brought him out of his thoughts. Mikasa led him to what looked like a fairly normal house, minus the large hole in the roof, revealing an attic of sorts. The rubble had been cleared away for an impromptu meeting.

"There's our beautiful bastard," Hange greeted, and Eren was almost thankful to hear her strange terms of endearment.

"Eren," Erwin greeted. Eren was almost surprised by them not using "Trips" but supposed an alias was largely worthless now. "It's good of you to join us."

Us was a very interesting group. There were the commanders, Erwin and Pixis, of course. With them were Anka, Hange, and Levi. The short captain was staring daggers at an older man Eren didn't know,

wearing a hat and leaning against the wall with a blond woman standing next to him.

Nearest to where Eren loomed over was Krista, standing next to the hole with Ymir nearby. Ymir looked a bit uneasy but tried to keep a cool smirk on her face. Krista didn't look afraid per se, but she did seem a bit more concerned by his arrival than he would have liked.

Mikasa stepped down to join next to them, standing with Armin. Who, to Eren's relief, still looked completely unafraid of the large creature his friend had become, despite his close near encounter with his teeth.

"About time," the blonde woman said bluntly.

Eins flared his nostril and Drei cocked his head, but Zwei was entirely unphased by the bold complaint. He wasn't sure if he appreciated how little she cared that he was a giant monster or if he found it concerning.

"Easy, Caven," the older man said in a disarming manner that Eren didn't quite believe. "We all have a lot to tell, I'm sure."

Eren eyed him with suspicion. There was something about this man, his aura that was like Mikasa and Levi. Given what those two had in common, that could be trouble.

"It's okay," Krista said, drawing his attention down. "I trust Kenny."

"You probably shouldn't," Levi warned coolly.

"Can't say the runt isn't wrong," Kenny remarked in amusement.

Krista sighed at that, and Eren decided to leave the matter alone for now.

Everyone's attention turned to Krista, as Eren made various growls, grunts, and hisses as Krista listened intently.

With a nod, she turned to the group. "Eren wanted to ask a few things before we start," Krista stated.

"Hmm? And what would that be?" Erwin asked, half suspecting the questions already.

"First, do we have Bertholdt secured?" Krista relayed.

"Obviously we aren't just going to go blurt out where he is exactly," Caven pointed out.

"But yeah, the tall fuck is locked up," Kenny confirmed with a smirk. "And thanks to Frieda, his powers shouldn't be working for a bit."

It wasn't lost on Eren that these two answered instead of the Commanders. Zwei privately concluded that they likely had Bertholdt rather than the Scouts or garrison.

"Just how did she manage that, exactly?" Erwin asked with interest on his stoic face.

"Hell if I know," Kenny answered with a shrug. "I don't know how she can do this stuff, just that she can."

And Frieda wasn't here. Which Eren took to mean she was still out cold after… whatever she did to Bertholdt.

He grunted to prompt Krista. "The second question," Krista started, her face turning grave. "… What did it cost us?"

Everyone turned solemn at that, even the normally dramatic Hange. It was Anka who cleared her throat and answered. "The current numbers are twenty-three deaths from the battle, three times that many wounded. Most from the blast of the Colossal Titan's transformation, and his attack on the wall."

Those numbers were low, compared to normal casualties humanity faced against the Titans. But still, no one missed the pained,

angered, and disappointed looks in the six eyes on Eren as he took those numbers as a silent wound.

Finally, a long breath escaped his mouths, and he made his last question.

"Has… Grice shown back up?" Krista answered, leaning toward Ymir. "That's the new one, right?" she asked in a whisper, getting a nod.

"No, the slithering bastard is still out hunting," Levi answered. "We've seen him in the distance, chewing on the Titans, so he hasn't run off."

Eren grunted, realizing he had been asleep for even less time than he thought.

[[[[So… who first?]]]]

Krista repeated the question, prompting her and the group to turn to Ymir.

"I think we've waited long enough for answers from you," Levi murmured.

Ymir sighed. "Okay, where to begin…?"

She told them everything. Everything she knew, at least; The Reign of the Eldian Empire, the legend of Helios, and the terrible truth about their giant foes.

They could only listen on in absolute silence, the words from her mouth rattling in their mind.

"… The Titans are humans," Erwin repeated solemnly.

That news was quite sobering, to say the least.

Everyone turned in alarm as Eren stumbled back a single step before catching himself, his heads hanging low.

"Eren?!" Armin called out in alarm as he peered over the side, Mikasa frowning in concern.

Eren didn't respond, just looking down at the ground with incomprehension. The divides between Eins, Zwei, and Drei were entirely and fully overshadowed by their shared struggle to understand this information. The Titans, the Maggots, their enemies, were… humans? Humans trapped in ways they couldn't control, but still. But… were they really human, the Titans? Or were they simply prisons for the humans that became them, forced to go along with their mindless desires?

He didn't know. He just knew that he still felt the same rage in his heart as he had for years.

"He's okay," Krista said sympathetically. "He's just in shock I think. He's… trying not to cause a scene."

"Strange thing to see, a big fella like that so rattled," Kenny remarked.

"You knew all of this?" Levi asked with a furrowed brow.

"Nah, at least not when you were a smaller punk," Kenny mused. "I got into the loop when the blue bloods recruited me."

"To answer the question? Yeah, they always have been humans," Ymir continued, glancing off to the side as she leaned on the wall. "But the Nine are the only ones that can change back and keep their minds. Why, no one can really say. The other Titans? They're just mindlessly trying to eat any people they find. And if they eat one of us, they get that shifter's power."

"So, that's how you and… the others became like this," Armin said with some discomfort as he stared at Ymir.

Ymir nodded curtly. "They were sneaking onto the island and my Titan happened to catch them by surprise before they could transform. I think I almost ate Reiner, but the… old Jaw Titan got in the way."

Eren was eerily silent as he took all that in, but then again, so were most of them.

Hange was quiet for a moment, hands together as she rested her head against them in contemplation. "Abnormals?"

Ymir sighed and continued on. "No idea, really. Regular titans always look kind of like they did as humans. Some of them just keep a bit more I guess."

"Muscle memory, or something similar," Hange theorized to herself. "And when we cut the neck… where Shifters are. I suppose they're in there as well."

Ymir nodded absently, the scientist running through several things in her head.

"So, all this time…" Levi said with a distant look on his frowning face. "We've been killing people?"

Erwin eyes the captain with a sympathetic gaze but said nothing otherwise.

"More like putting them out of their misery," Ymir said firmly. "It's like a nightmare you can barely recall, but it never stops."

If Levi took some comfort in that, he didn't show it.

"Don't go getting yourself tied in a knot about it," Kenny said with a frown. "If ya can't save someone, sometimes it's better to put them down."

Levi definitely didn't take any comfort in that.

"You're certain that there is still life beyond the walls and this… island you say we are on?" Pixis inquired with a chin stroke.

Ymir paused, looking up. "I mean, it might be possible that Marley fucked up and the world has been taken over by Titans since last I was around? But Skullface? Grice? He seems to be… younger than me in terms of birth years," Ymir said uncertainly, not sure how to word that better. "Between him and the shifters, I'm assuming humanity is still as fine as it always was."

No one commented on that double meaning.

"Then they came here for the Founding Titan," Erwin deduced.

"They had to have. They wouldn't have risked kicking in the walls otherwise," Ymir stated, getting curious looks. "As far as the rest of the world knows, you're still the Eldian Empire here. They don't know you've all lost your memories, or that you can't take control of the Titans anytime you want."

"About that," Hange said with a furrowed brow. "How does Marley control the Titans without the Founder?"

"A lot like how you heard sheep with dogs," Ymir answered flatly.

Levi looked at her for a moment before realization came to his eyes. "They just unleash them and let things unfold."

"While using their shifters to deal with them afterward," Erwin summarized. "And they use the Eldians in their own lands as cannon fodder."

"I doubt that's changed much," Ymir murmured knowingly.

Everyone paused as Eren trembled with rage, his wrath an escape from his shock.

"He's not saying anything," Krista informed as Eren's tails twitched dangerously. "He's just mad."

"That's putting it lightly," Hange remarked, hand on her hip.

"Eren, calm down, please," Mikasa requested, not wanting Eren to lash out and cause a scene.

Each head inhaled and exhaled in sync before nodding sharply for them all to continue.

"That's… about all I have to say. We used to rule the world, we tore ourselves apart and the king fucked off to this island while letting the world go fuck the rest of us over," Ymir summarized.

"I feel there's more to that story, but I believe you've told us most of what you knew," Erwin mused in acceptance.

"What about the Warhammer? Is it really strong enough to take down the others?" Pixis asked contemplatively.

"I was being serious before: All I heard about it is that no one actually knows what it does," Ymir reminded. "But considering the Tyburs are treated like saviors while they call the rest of us devils, well…"

"And… you think Frieda is the Founder?" Erwin asked carefully as he eyed Kenny and Caven, who didn't react to the topic.

"It's the only thing that makes a little bit of sense," Ymir answered with a troubled look of her own. "Though I really don't get why the royal family hasn't done anything until now, or why she's crawled out of the shadows, unless it's because of Eren."

Kenny grunted. "I "know" why, but I damn well don't know how to explain it. Family had some damn curse on it best as I can say. Until Frieda, none of them could use the Founder as they wanted."

"… Wait, WHAT?!" Ymir exclaimed in shock. "What do you mean by that? Do you mean the whole destroying the world thing was a bluff from the start?!"

"Ymir, calm down," Krista said with a frown. "And what do you mean, destroy the world?"

Ymir hesitated, biting her tongue as she looked at Kenny and Caven uncertainly. She had left that little detail out.

"Anyone shoots me in the eye, and I'm whacking them off this wall with my tail!"

The loud voice was faint, but it brought the conversation to a hall and pulled even Eren's attention as he looked off to the side, Krista poking her head out of the hole with the other cadets.

Up on the wall, they could see the unusual form of Grice pulling over the top, the Crawler glancing around before easily spotting the giant golden figure.

"Well, guess the loudmouth is back," Ymir mused, glad for the distraction.

Without warning, Grice scaled down the walls, using his digits to slide down most of the way. Once at the bottom, he quickly scaled over the buildings, coming towards the building.

"Yeag-… Eren," Grice greeted, glancing up at the hole. **"We having a meeting here?"**

Eren felt as awkward as Grice did, he was sure.

[[[[Yeah, Ymir just got done telling us about… Marley, Eldia, everything. What she knows, I mean.]]]]

"Well, everyone brace yourselves, I'm coming up," Grice said as he went to the side of the building and climbed onto it.

Everyone uneasily steadied themselves as the large creature could be seen looming over one side of the whole.

"Was that necessary?" Anka asked, listening to the creaking wood under Grice's weight.

"You all picked a building that was just tall enough that I can't just lean my head up and peak into it," Grice argued **. "Why are we here instead of by the boulder or… anywhere outside?"**

"Well, if we're going to be working with big beautiful beasts like you two, we thought we should try to do it closer to eye level," Hange answered with a smile.

"… I have very mixed feelings about you," Grice said slowly.

"Don't worry, you'll come around, Handsome," Hange said with a wink, leaving the Crawler tongue-tied. Almost literally.

[[[[Are you going to give us your story now?]]]]

Grice shook his head clear before looking at an impatient Eren. "Not just yet. I want to hear what the She-King has to say."

[[She-King?]]

[[[You mean queen?]]]

[The hell?]

"Still weird," Grice murmured, glancing between the three heads as he turned to face the humans **. "Eren says that "Ymir" filled you in on the outside world?"**

"She did," Erwin answered calmly. "But what do you know of things within the walls?"

"An ally of ours told us some of what went on in here. You all forgot about the outside world because of the first King of the Walls turned craven," Grice summarized.

"About that," Armin commented. "You mistook Eren for his father, right?"

"Yes, and who the hell are you kids?" Grice asked with a head tilt.

[[[[My friends, and fellow soldiers.]]]]

Grice nodded absently as Mikasa stepped forward. "Mister Yeager has been missing for five years. But if you can't change back, I don't think he would have a chance to meet you."

"Ahhh. You're wondering where I have been," Grice realized, shifting uncomfortably. **"Honestly, I went into a deep sleep. Hibernation I suppose. I had to; it was the only way to stave off my starvation while trying to get control of this form."**

[[[[Control?]]]]

Grice snorted ***. "I don't know if it's that form or something about you Yeagers, but I didn't have an easy time getting used to this body. Some part of it fights me, and that part is always hungry."***

"Sounds like hell," Levi said with some sympathy.

"Only at first," Grice said with a head shake. **"Grisha was supposed to wake me back up. And I thought he did when Eren here kept putting out a call."**

[What?]

[[A call?]]

[[[When did we do that?]]]

"That roar of yours. You know the one, you did it more than once," Grice reminded with some annoyance.

"The one that stunned Titans?" Armin supplied.

"It did what now?" Grice asked, his long snout whipping to Armin in an instant. **"It does that? We can do that?"**

"Umm… Eren's can?" Armin answered carefully.

"I feel increasingly cheated in terms of what creatures me and Grisha became," Grice said in envy before making very notable licks at the air. **"She's here."**

Levi tensed as Kenny tilted his head to the door. It opened and they were all far less surprised to see Frieda than they probably should be. "Well, I hope I'm not too late for the meeting," she greeted with a smile.

"Lady Frieda," Erwin greeted neutrally. "Or should I say, queen?"

"My, you've already gotten that far?" Frieda asked rhetorically as she strolled across the room, glancing up at the hole. "I see our large friends are all here."

"I'm friends to my fellow Eldians on Paradis," Grice said pointedly **. "You? I'm not sure whose side you're on, Fritz."**

Frieda allowed her smile to drop a bit. "That's fair. I suppose I should be happy that you haven't tried to eat me. And it's Reiss now."

"You helped captured the Colossal, so obviously the Vow has either been destroyed or loosened," Grice remarked.

"The vow?" Mikasa asked with her brows knitted together.

Frieda looked at her and cocked her head. "Mikasa Ackerman."

Kenny jolted, and it was not easily overlooked. Still, Mikasa kept her attention on the noble. "You know who I am?"

"I made it a point to keep an eye on everyone connected to Grisha Yeager."

That might not have been the best thing to say as Grice leaned forwards menacing with a growl, and Eren's eyes glared at her with suspicion.

To many people's surprise and frustration, she ignored the two threatening monsters, looking at one person and one person only: Krista. "It's been a while. I'm sorry we didn't get a chance to talk at the trial before everything happened."

"…" Krista blinked owlishly. "I'm sorry, but do I… know you?"

Frieda blinked before smiling. "Oh, I'm sorry. I was hoping you might remember me by now: My name is Frieda Reiss. I'm your half-sister."

"Obviously," Levi remarked, getting looks. "They have the same face."

"He's not wrong," Armin privately admitted.

"My half-sister?" Krista asked in surprise. "Wait, so were you…?"

"We'll talk later," Frieda assured, glancing up at Eren and Grice.

"If Krista Lenz is your half-sister," Erwin remarked. "Why exactly was she hidden in the military?"

"Officially, the reason she knows: to cover up and hide my father's illegitimate child," Frieda answered before looking to Krista in apology. "In truth, I was trying to protect you. After Wall Maria fell, things were… difficult for me."

"Difficult, how?" Grice asked, eyeing her pointedly.

Frieda met Eren's eyes for an instant.

Eren blinked as he felt something in the back of his head and it wasn't The Storm. Some half-forgotten memory, lost in a dream. Shining halls, filled with screams and blood, and the faint feeling of power on his tongues.

Frieda shook her head as she faced the group. "Yes, whatever you've heard so far is true. I am the Queen of the Walls and the current holder of the Founding Titan," she explained solemnly as she glanced at Grice. "I'm sure you want to know why we abandoned the mainland," she said, looking up to Pixis and Erwin. "Why haven't we used the Founder to help against the Pure Titans," she said, eyes turning to Armin and Mikasa. "Why we allowed things to get this terrible?"

Both cadets gave her hard stares. They, like Eren, knew well the horrors unleashed by the Fall of Maria. And even Armin fully emphasized with Eren's immense capacity for rage, staring at someone who perhaps was responsible for it all in a large way. Annie, Reiner, and Bertholdt had done the deed, but by all they had been told, the Founding Titan was able to actually control titans. That kind of power could have stopped it all at any time.

Armin balled his fist. "A lot of people have died, Ma'am, and it sounds like you had every chance to save them."

Frieda bowed her head at that before her eyes steeled. "The Founder has the power to control all Titans and everyone with the blood of our shared ancestor, Ymir."

Several heads looked to Ymir at that, who bristled. "I'm not THAT old you fucks!"

Frieda smiled at that, the mood lightened if only a little. "So, how do you think one of the nine could have rebelled like that?"

"… Can the Warhammer resist the Founder?" Hange suggested.

Frieda laughed at that. "No, no, that's the Attack Titan. But it is the only true exception."

"That… explains a few things," Grice said in a strange tone **. "But it doesn't answer the question. Some just thought that Karl was**

too weak of will to control the nine. Or, by Marley's account, Helios found a way to muffle the control of the Founder."

"He didn't," Frieda answered with a headshake.

"… Oh, shit," Levi said with a frown as something clicked. "That King a hundred years ago, he didn't really just run to this island because he had to, did he?"

Frieda shook her head. "The End of the Eldian Empire was orchestrated by its 145th king, Karl Fritz."

There was silence. Most didn't have the context or understanding to grasp the depth of that revelation. But the idea that they had been led here and betrayed by the very king meant to lead them, sentenced to this hell was something that didn't sit well with any of them. But it was not Eren who took it the worst, shocked though he was.

"… Why?" Grice breathed, his voice dangerous, his body trembling. He knew that the 145th king had turned craven, but to go that far mad with self-hatred? The Owl had either not known that or spared them of that information.

Frieda gave him a sympathetic look. "The holders of the Nine can receive memories from the past hosts. The Founder can do this even more so. Over a thousand years of using the Titans as weapons of mass destruction, it pulled at Karl Fritz's heart in a way it hadn't affected his predecessors. I think it drove him insane with grief. So, he used the Tyburs to turn his subjects on each other, to let Marley take over and lead our ancestors here… knowing the world would one day come to finish us off, and welcoming them to do so. To that end he placed a vow on the Founding Titan: Anyone of the ruling family, the only ones who can use the Founder's full potential, would succumb to his ideology, and his beliefs. Because he thought we were all condemned for the horrors Eldia unleashed in the past and that the world would be… better off without us. Because without us, he believed the Power of the Titans would be gone as well."

For once, Armin identified completely with the snarling rage he could hear emitting from Eren.

But it was nothing to the long and loud screech of Grice. It was a terrible, shrilling noise that caused Eren to watch the Crawler carefully.

Without a single word, Grice leapt onto the building across the street and began to slam his fists into the ceiling and slam his tail into the wall beneath him.

Eren eyed the display with understanding, his leftmost head glancing about to make sure no one was getting close and that the cannons weren't moving.

"THAT RAT OF A WHORE! HE LEFT ALL OF US TO DIE! HE BETRAYED US TO MARLEY! TO EVERYONE! OUR FRIENDS, OUR FAMILIES, OUR PEOPLE WERE TREATED LIKES VERMIN AND FED TO DOGS BECAUSE HE WAS TOO WEAK AND COWARDLY TO DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING ELSE! HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE WILL TO DO THE DEED HIMSELF!"

On and on Grice raged, the walls and floors splintering under his wrath. No one said anything, knowing it would be drowned out in the yells and roars.

His fists became slower and sluggish, prompting Eren to approach Grice carefully.

"We came here, looking for something I don't think existed in the first place," Grice whispered in a lost voice, glancing up at the three heads. **"Grisha's dead, my comrades are gone, and whatever family I have left are either facing a fate worse than death or have become dogs of Marley. What am I even supposed to do now?"**

With more care than perhaps Eren thought himself capable of, his tails slowly moved over to the Crawler, keeping the thorns pressed

down in "club form" as they gently pushed Grice back to his feet.

Grice met Eren's gaze, taking in the solemn but barely contained wrath just behind the empathic emerald eyes.

[[[[We do the only thing we can do.]]]]

[[[Just keep moving forward…]]]]

[[Until our enemies…]]

[Are destroyed.]

{[[[All Of Them.]]]}

No one noticed Krista shiver.

No one noticed Frieda close her eyes.

End of Chapter

Well, the main cast is finally caught up on the stateo f the world. Even Grice learned some things that he didn't know. Eren, meanwhile, had a mental meaeting with "The Storm."

Not much else to say. Next chapter, however, is where we geti nto AU lore- Grice will tell his story and Frieda will explain her personal story some.

Also, new Godzilla x Kong movie got announced for next year! New Empire, which just sounds more and more epic the more I hear about it.

Early viewing of chapters 24-25 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 24

God of Hate

[We found it. Deep in an abandoned mine.]

The Eldians Restorationists looked around a vast cave in amazement, filled with ruins from a people even older than Eldia.

[We never really knew what we found.]

Before them was a giant pool of a black, oil-like substance that glowed with spotted lights of azure and gold.

[Some of us called it the Lake of Death.]

They set up a hidden base within the tomb, studying the strange substances collected in the pool-Especially Grisha.

[We felt something there. A pull. Like a memory we had all forgotten.]

No matter what Grisha did, it would not dilute, evaporate, or change in any way. It was just… there.

[We thought it had to be related to the Titans, to Ymir herself. What else could it be?]

Then, one day, Grisha stared down into the pool. And within the blackness, he saw his sister. He saw Freya, crying and being ripped apart by dogs. He saw the man who did it. He saw his parents who tried to ignore that it ever happened. He saw everything in this world he ever hated.

[I came in there one day and Grisha…]

Hate swallowed him whole.

[He fell in.]

Everyone rushed to the edge, Grice and Dina first among them. The lights of the oily pool dimmed ominously.

[And when he came out?]

A great, golden beast emerged, roaring and wrathful as it pulled itself out of the pool.

[But he only had two heads.]

Then, just as suddenly, he vanished in a burst of lightning. Grisha lay collapsed on the floor, his comrades rushing to help him.

[Grisha thought we had our ace against Marley. No, we all did.]

The smile on his face wasn't hate though. It was relief. It was amazement. It was hope.

[So, we tried it as well.]

And one by one, each of them went into the pool.

[All of us.]

Except for Dina… she was special, for some reason.

[It didn't work for all of us.]

Some emerged in disappointment.

[Most of them turn into something like me.]

Others leaped forth in other forms. Like a winged serpent or a bat-like creature.

[Only Grisha got that one though.]

And for once, Grisha was confident that they could take back their lives, their future and their freedom.

[But we didn't know how to trigger the transformation again.]

They tried biting their hands, bathing in the pools, and even drinking it. But nothing worked.

[Then, one day… someone betrayed us.]

A child, small with blonde hair and Grisha's face, his eyes horrified and sad.

[They took us here, the Marlayeans to turn us into Titans.]

But not before they were tortured.

[But when they tried…]

The Marleyean guards looked up in horror as the Eldians turned into monsters, things far worse than Titans. They swarmed their wall, killing them all and destroying their ship with a savage vengeance.

[But now, we were stuck. On this island and in these forms.]

The small horde of monsters roamed Paradis for weeks and months.

[Me and the others, we had to eat the Titans, just to keep sane.]

And some of Grisha's willingly given flesh.

[Eventually, the Owl found us again.]

Eren. Eren Kruger.

[He was one of the Nine. The Attack Titan.]

The man's muscular Titan wrestled with one of the more starving Crawlers.

[He told us things. Things, I'm not sure how he knew. The truth about the Coward King and the Vow.]

He stood before the beasts as a man, Grisha's two heads looming over him protectively.

[He also knew some things about what we turned into.]

How to hibernate. To speak. And more.

[He never told us how and none of us were sane enough to ask that at the time.]

Not even Grisha. Especially Grisha.

[His wife, Dina. She… was turned into a Titan before we transformed.]

Why did that woman seem almost familiar…?

[He couldn't kill her. So he… we left her to be at the time.]

But she still followed them. Slowly.

[The Owl left after that. He was running out of time.]

He was dying, but from what…?

[We stayed like that for a long time. Weeks? Months? I don't know.]

They were getting worse.

[My comrades, they… most of them died.]

They tried to stop them.

[They went mad from the hunger and just… ate each other.]

It wasn't like the Titans. Titans weren't starving and in pain. The Titans weren't desperate.

[Me and the others learned how to stave it off with bouts of hibernation. Grisha woke us up.]

Until he didn't.

[Last time, he woke only me up. He found how to turn into a human. He had a plan.]

To go inside the Walls.

[I don't know what, if anything, went wrong. The next thing I know, I hear Yeager's roar and came to the walls.]

And here we are.

Everyone stood in silence as they absorbed the sad, tragic tale of Grisha Yeager. From the death of his sister to joining the Restorationists. Not to mention all the strange things in the outside world that they had to just try to imagine: Large flying machines? Horseless carriages? Horseless steel caravans at that, traveling on paths made by lines of metal and wood.

It hammered home to Hange that while the government had kept them stagnate, the outside world had pressed on in the past hundred years.

But Erwin and Pixis glanced at one another subtly, both very sure that Grice was avoiding some key, important details in the story. Parts that were irrelevant or too personal? Or, perhaps, something he wanted to tell Eren directly in his own time?

Armin silently tried to take in these reveals, eyes wide as the implications overwhelmed him. But it was Mikasa who looked back out and saw that Eren was unnaturally silent and deep in thought. No

growls, no glares, just empty expressions of contemplation. She wondered, what must be going through his head, hearing all of this?

If only she knew.

"I hid in that plugged-up hole you have, until the fighting started," Grice finished after a moment.

"So, that's why we couldn't spot you. Your slithering ass was right under our noses," Levi remarked with a frown.

"In my defense, I had no idea what was going on anymore," Grice said. "I thought Grisha might be in trouble. But that's about all of my story. Any questions?"

"Only about a million!" Hange answered with a wide, wide grin before her face turned serious, looking at Frieda with a mild glare. "But I think we have one more story to hear."

Frieda hummed softly. "Grice. Did Grisha tell you what his plan was, in coming here?"

"If he did, I don't remember it," Grice answered gruffly. "My memories get fuzzy when the hunger sets in."

Frieda paused, leaning heavily on her walking stick. "The day Maria fell, he came to me. He wanted me to stop the Titans. But he knew I couldn't. We both transformed. The full power of the Founder might have stood a chance that day. But even without the vow, I was still inexperienced and new to the Founding Titan. He defeated me, and…"

Everyone stared at her intently, waiting for her to finish.

"He killed the whole bleeding family," Kenny finished bluntly. Caven gave him a look but didn't say anything, even as several gasped or looked on in shock. "The dad, the mom, and the entire litter of siblings Frieda had."

Eren jerked back in alarm, but none questioned it as he remained speechless.

"That's a lie!" Mikasa exclaimed suddenly. "Mr. Yeager may have had a lot of secrets, but he was always a doctor. Grice's story confirms that much. He would have never done something like that."

There was a brief silence before Erwin spoke up, looking up at the Crawler. "Would you agree, Grice?" he asked evenly. "The Grisha that lived in the walls might be very different from the one you knew. Would your Grisha have ever done such a thing?"

Grice stood on the roof, deep in thought. **"Before we came here, I would have said no. That doesn't sound like Grisha. But now…"** he looked to Eren. **"Did he love your mother?"**

Eren's entire body coiled as he snapped out of his shock, his heads staving off their individual reactions to the memory of his mother's death: Eins's rage, Zwei's solemnness, and Drei's sorrow.

[[[[Yes. He did.]]]]

Grice nodded slowly. **"I know I'm stepping on a mile of nerves, but I have to ask. When the Wall fell… was she alive?"**

Eren froze immediately, slowly turning to him with wide eyes.

[[As far as he knew.]]

[[[S-she died that day.]]]

[…]

[[[[He didn't know.]]]]

Grice turned back to the group as a whole **. "Family has always been important to Grisha. Losing his sister is what put him on this path. After we came here, losing his family nearly destroyed**

him. Even as we adapted at first, he was still in a hell of his own. So, if it was to save his second family?"

"How would killing an entire family save anyone?" Armin asked in morbid, unsettled curiosity.

Frieda sighed heavily. "Because, the Vow, Karl's Curse, only affects the royal family. He believed we'd try to take it back if he stole it. That's the only reason I can think of."

There was just one issue with that line of reasoning, they all knew.

[[[[… You survived.]]]]

Krista swallowed deeply. "Yo-you survived…?"

Frieda looked her half-sister in the eye before holding up her arm, pulling back the sleeve to reveal her scars with an ominous look on her face.

Eren stared intently. He could taste it in his mouth. Her flesh, her blood, and a morsel of…

{{{{Power}}}}

"I managed to escape with my life. It left me scarred and my powers unable to heal me," Frieda answered with a frown. "Grisha retreated. I presumed he overused his own powers. After that… I was in a coma for years. When I awoke, the Vow Against War had been lifted, but my ability to use the founder had been crippled."

"That's… new," Ymir remarked with a frown. "At least, I think it is. I've never heard of a Shifter's powers being crippled. And Shifters can normally heal from anything that doesn't kill them."

"It's never happened before, no," Frieda confirmed, glancing at Pixis and Erwin. "I'm sure you great commanders have noticed that the tunes of the court have changed much in recent years?"

Many gave Erwin and Pixis curious looks.

"I have noticed a good number of nobles retiring or… passing away over the years, and that their successors are much more pleasant and some might even be generous," Pixis mused to himself, feigning fondness. "I was wondering just who was shuffling the courts around."

"The attitude to the Scouts has improved somewhat, not to mention that Niles seemed to be very… busy and short-staffed for a while," Erwin noted with narrowed eyes. "I thought that some corrupt element of the Military police had grown too bold and required some unseen purges."

"You're both right in a lot of ways," Frieda admitted with a tired look.

"After Frieda woke up, she was a changed woman," Kenny said with a chuckle. "We've been busting heads and moving things along in the shadows."

"To what end though?" Hange questioned with a raised eyebrow.

Frieda managed a small smile. "Changing the status quo isn't easy to do, short of an open revolt."

"Queen of the Walls," Grice said with something that almost sounded pleased. **"Are you implying what I think you are?"**

"That I have no intention of Eldia fading away into memory," Frieda answered solemnly. "I thought it would be Grisha I'd have to convince that we were no longer enemies. But now I'm standing before his son."

"You would have worked with the man that killed your entire family…?" Krista asked in disbelief.

Their family, no one said aloud, but it was heard all the same.

She was acutely aware of Eren's head looming behind her, watching intently. And probably wondering the same thing.

Frieda gripped her walking stick harshly. "I don't know. Ever since I awoke, I knew things had to change. But when I thought I'd stand before Grisha again, I just wanted to know one thing. An answer that I wanted him to tell me himself," she paused, eyes glancing past Krista and right into Eren's eyes. "Why did my family have to die when I was spared?"

[[[[…]]]]

{{{{… }}}}

"But it doesn't matter. There has been too much hefting the blame of the past onto the next generation," Frieda said simply, looking up at the giants. "I'm not asking you to pledge yourselves to me. I'm only asking if you can bring yourselves to trust me, to work with me to save our people and stand against the hateful world that awaits us."

Eren's middle head growled something out. Grice translated before Krista could. "And if we can't?"

"Then kill me," Frieda offered bluntly.

"Frieda, the hell are you doing?" Kenny asked warily, his face tinged with unease as he eyed everyone for any hint of taking that invitation.

"Making a point," Frieda answered as the situation became tense, glancing around at everyone in the room. "If you think I'm your enemy still, you should strike me down now. I won't blame you. It's why I haven't claimed the throne openly yet. I want what's best for Eldia. If that's my death, then so be it."

"Let's tone it back a moment with the martyrdom. I'm… hardly in a position to know what is best for the people of this island," Grice said in surprise, glancing toward Erwin, Hange, and Pixis. **"As**

far as I can tell, you lot are some kind of authorities here, right?"

[[[[They're two of the highest authorities in the military, and Hange is a genius that studies Titans.]]]]

Grice nodded quietly to that as the commanders look intently at Frieda. "Am I understanding it right that you are asking for our support?" Pixis asked, getting a nod in response.

"Why?" Erwin asked skeptically. "You could have easily taken the throne "officially" without any of this. You didn't have to reveal anything. So why?"

"Because revealing the truth to the people at large will spread doubt and suspicion throughout the Walls. If we are to survive and have a future, we can't succumb to infighting. Eren is the hope people need to rally behind. I can steer the People of the Wall on the path to surviving and defeating our enemies. And I don't want to do that from the shadows anymore," Frieda answered simply

"Yeah, but…" Ymir spoke up uneasily. "Even if we don't trust you, won't killing you just make it so that the Founder is given to a random newborn somewhere?"

"Terrifying," Levi summarized, imagining what a clueless infant might accidentally do with all that power.

"Depends on how you kill me," Frieda answered simply, looking up at Eren meaningfully.

[[[Can we trust her?]]]

[I don't know, but she IS a shifter!]

[[So is Ymir.]]

[We barely trust her.]

[[[But she might be a big help!]]]

[[If she can recover her powers, yes…]]

[Do we care who's on the throne?]

[[[As long as they're doing their job right.]]]

[[And not getting in our way.]]

[[[[…]]]]

Krista watched the exchange before nodding as Eren finished with a growl to her. "Eren says he doesn't care. He'll trust the commanders on this one. For now."

Erwin nodded. They didn't need Eren's approval, obviously, but having the giant titan-killer distrust their monarch could cause problems in the long run. "I'm not sure if we can truly trust you yet, Queen Frieda, but we do appear to have a common goal."

"So long as you preserve and protect the People of the Walls, I will not speak against you," Pixis granted with a warning edge to his grandfatherly voice, before smiling. "Besides, any woman that can enjoy a drink as you can is one I can respect."

Frieda tipped her head to them. "Thank you."

"But if I so much as smell that Vow of yours coming back, you* will *be the first human I eat," Grice warned dangerously.

"I'll hold you to that," Frieda said with a voice that spoke more of relief than fear.

The group fell into an uneasy silence.

[[[[… What now?]]]]

Krista repeated the question but almost felt like everyone already guessed as much.

"It seems we have at least two very… large allies, possibly more in the future," Erwin remarked. "Neither of them can turn into a human form."

"One of which has a feeding problem," Levi reminded as he looked at Grice.

"I have it under control," Grice stated, non-defensively **. "But I do see the point."**

"Umm…" Armin raised his hand, getting everyone to stop. "Permission to speak?"

"Granted, Armin," Erwin granted.

"Well, I know it wasn't exactly what we had planned, and the civilians might not be happy, but perhaps we should turn Trost into an area for them to stay?" Armin suggested.

"Living as a giant monster in an abandoned city is kind of what we've been doing outside the walls anyway," Grice said in agreement. **"It's a good idea, kid."**

"But what about this fella?" Kenny said, motioning to Eren. "Getting out won't exactly be easy for him."

"About that," Armin spoke again. "I don't know how easy it would be, exactly, but I think Eren is small enough to get out of the breach if he moved the boulder. So, we just need Grice to move it back and climb over the top?"

"Me?" Grice said, looking his head back in surprise, eyeing the boulder in the distance **. "Uhhh, maybe? I don't know if I can do that on my own."**

"Do you have any more comrades outside?" Armin asked.

"… I'm not sure if any of them are still sane," Grice answered with remorse. **"But even just one might be able to make it easy. Me and Yeager will just have to be careful about it the first time.**

"This could work best for us," Hange said with wide eyes. "If we can still go through here, we won't need to have to make an entirely new route from one of the other gates and set up new supply points."

[[[What about when we retake Wall Maria?]]]

Everyone glance to Eren's left head for an instant before Krista translated.

"We'll cross that road when we get there," Erwin answered in acknowledgment.

Eren decided to leave it at that.

"Now, I think we have a prisoner that requires a visit," Frieda said with a meaningful smile. "Section Commander, Captain, would you care to join me?"

"Why?" Levi asked warily.

"Because four-eyes over there really wants to," Kenny said with a snort, seeing the disturbingly eager look in Hange's eye. "And Frieda knows you don't trust me."

[[That was already obvious to everyone.]]

"Shut it, brat," Levi said, not even waiting for an interpretation.

Eins snorted, ever satisfied with Levi's displeasure.

"Fine, sure, let's go see what our traitor has to say," Levi said with a head shake.

Armin shifted uneasily. He wanted a chance to speak with Bertholdt again, but knew now was not the time.

With that, Frieda left with Kenny and Caven, Hange and Levi following after. But not before Frieda turned to Krista with another smile. "I'm come by afterward, Historia."

There was silence as the door closed. Mikasa raised a brow at the girl. "Historia?"

"It's… my birth name," Krista answered with a sigh. "I'll explain some other time, please."

No one else dared to pry into the troubled girl's business.

Erwin and Pixis frowned before looking to Eren, who nodded. None of them trusted Frieda yet. They were all on the same page, for now.

"So, umm, what about me?" Ymir asked slowly, pointing to herself. "Do I need to… go back in a cell or what?"

"No, I think we're well past that point," Pixis said with a laugh. "Merely remain within Trost for now."

"Ahh, keeping me with the other monsters, gotcha," Ymir said with a nod. She was suddenly aware of said monsters giving her dirty looks. "Geez, you dicks, it was a joke," Ymir said under their stares.

Krista said nothing, glancing around with a troubled look on her face.

[[[… Can we have a moment to talk, Historia?]]]

"What?" Krista asked in surprise.

"Eren wants to have a talk with the princess," Grice translated.

"What? Why?" Mikasa asked with a frown.

"You were listening to the same story, right?" Grice reminded pointedly **. "Come on you three. I'd like to hear what Grisha was up to while I was asleep. And I'm sure his son would be biased."**

"Probably not in the way you think," Armin murmured before turning to Mikasa. "Come on, Mikasa, I think they need this."

Mikasa relented in understanding, "We'll be nearby when you're done, Eren."

"Yeah, I'm not going," Ymir said firmly.

Eren gave her a look.

"I'm not leaving Krista alone with you. You already ***tasted*** Krista before I did!" Ymir defended.

"He did what?" Grice asked in alarm.

Eins's mouth opened in shock, Zwei froze while refusing to respond, and Drei looked away with wide eyes and a soft glow in his throat.

"Huh, so that's how he blushes," Armin murmured in surprise while Mikasa had a disturbingly blank look about her.

"Ymir," Krista said in exasperation. "I appreciate the sentiment, but… please?"

Ymir looked alarmed before biting her tongue. "If that's what you want," she said in disappointment.

The trio of humans left while Grice climbed off the building, moving down the street, hopefully out of hearing range.

[[[[…]]]]

[[[…]]]

[[…]]

[…]

"Well?" Krista asked with a sigh. "What did you want to say, Eren?"

[[[[What am I supposed to say? I'm sorry? I wish he hadn't killed them?]]]]

Krista took a breath. "I… didn't even know them. I doubt they even knew I existed."

[[And now they never will.]]

[[[And that's why you're sad.]]]

[But that's not all, it is?]

"No, of course it isn't!" Krista screamed in frustration, running her hands through her hair in frustration. "I thought I was just some noble's bastard! That's what Kenny told me! Now it turns out I'm part of the **royal** family, my half-sister is the secret queen, and everyone else is dead because your father killed them! Oh, and my family has the Founding Titan but couldn't use it because of a curse or vow or something?! Then there are people outside the walls that want to kill us all, Ymir is decades old, she's been working with my sister, and-and-UGGGH!"

Krista suddenly kicked a nearby chair, sending it crashing over, but probably hurting her own foot more than anything.

She didn't care though, breathing heavily and ignoring the pain in her foot. "I just… feel like I don't know anything anymore. That everything in my life was a lie, that everyone was using me and I'm not even sure what for anymore."

Eren let her rant off, taking it all in with thoughtful concern.

[[[[What do you want?]]]]

Krista opened her mouth before closing it with a bitter look. "I don't even know. I've lived my whole life wanting to be seen as this selfless girl, who'd die and be remembered fondly. Because I thought that was the only meaning I could have in life anymore. Now…?"

[[[What about Ymir?]]]

Krista brought a hand to her face, rubbing her eyes. "I will always be Ymir's ally, I promised her that much. But I don't know what to feel about her right now, or anything else."

[[You've found out the most secrets, even more than me. It makes sense you'd be the most overwhelmed.]]

Krista sighed as she removed her hand. Eren was sure her eyes were filled with unshed tears.

[If you want to be alone, I'll leave. If you want to vent, I wouldn't share even if I could.]

Krista almost laughed at that. "T-thanks, I think I needed that," she said before a strange look came over her face. "What about you, Eren? What do you think about all this?"

[[[[… I don't think Frieda is telling us everything.]]]]

The blond nodded in agreement, she expected as much to be honest.

[I don't know why my father killed her family.]

[[[If you want nothing to do with any of this, you don't have to be here.]]]

[[Grice can translate if needed.]]

Krista was silent before letting out a soft chuckle, tears leaking down her face. "I'm sorry, it's just… I think this is the first time anyone ever asked me what I wanted."

[[[[It sounds like this is the first time you tried to do what you wanted, just for yourself.]]]]

Krista shook her head. "I'll stay. I want to help, I really do. But… Eren?" she paused with an unsure look. "Do you remember… anything after your heads grew back? Before you snapped out of that… trance?"

[[[[…]]]]

{{{{… }}}}

Krista stiffened minutely as if looking past Eren, at something that wasn't there.

[[[[What did you hear?]]]]

"Not much, but… there were two words that I could make out, barely," Krista said cautiously.

She had Eren's full attention now. It was just a bit intimidating, all six eyes watching her.

"Maggots. Whelp."

{{{{… bidibidibidi… }}}}

End of Chapter

So, yeah, that's the big diverence point in the story so far. Grisha and his group found this "Lake of Death" that turned them into Kaiju-shifters. They had no idea how to trigger it, but it went off on its own when they were sent to Paradis.

Frieda and Grisha fought, but she survived at the expense of being crippled. And she's been changing things behind the scenes for when she openly takes the throne and expose the truth to everyone.

Oh, yeah, and Krista/Historia. Yeah, at some point, I realized that she recieved more reveleations than Eren did and decided this would be the perfect time for her to have an overwhelmed heart-toheart with Eren.

And as for that last line… if don't know what bidibidibidi means, that's how the onomatopoeia for Ghidoriah's iconic roar. Yeah, just going to leave that out there.

Early viewing of chapters 25-26 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 25

God of Hate

AN ***PLEASE READ: This fic might be going on Hiatus. Might.***

No, no, before you ask, it's not from lack of ideas, motivation, or anything else. It's mainly because I'm considering waiting for something. As you all should know, God of Hate is primarily based on the Monsterverse and its lore.

Monsterverse has a new movie in 2024, Godzilla-Kong: The New Empire. And I am becoming increasingly curious about that movie and the new villain, and how the new lore bits could fit into my current plans in this fic, and inspire changes.

All that said and done, if I do put God of Hate on hold until than- and it is still an IF- I ***will be giving the temporary spot to one of my other AoT fics. Not set on which, just giving you a heads up on that.***

With that, enjoy the chapter!

End of AN

"Can I ask you kids a question?" Grice asked after they walked a block or two from Yeager. Well, he walked, and they used their strange gas-things to keep up with him.

"Umm, sure? How can we help?" Armin offered uncertainly.

"What was Grisha like, in the walls?" Grice questioned idly.

Armin and Mikasa share surprised looks before mutually deciding to answer.

"He was kind," Mikasa answered softly. "He took me in after my parents died."

"Hmm? That mean Eren back there is your brother?" he asked idly.

Mikas blushed and looked away. "No. He's like family to me, but no, we never had… that kind of bond."

Grice caught the meaningful glances Armin was giving him and understood. Eren was much more than a brother to this girl **. "Yeah, well, that sounds like Grisha. He was always happy to welcome new recruits. That's why we never let him do the actual recruiting. Man's heart was in the right place, but he sometimes forgot how many of our own would turn on us,"** Grice remembered fondly **. "Actually, it occurs to me, I never got your names?"**

"Armin Arlert," Armin introduced.

"Mikasa Ackerman," Mikasa gave.

Grice cocked his head. **"Ackerman? Huh, I suppose the Hiruzun blood is on your mother's side,"** he mused, getting a confused look from Mikasa. **"… You have no idea what Hiruzu is, right. It's where your ancestors are from, where you got your looks from. At least, I think it's Hiruzu, but I can't imagine many other Orient nations having people here."**

A lot of what he was saying went over their heads, even if Armin filed most of it away for later, but they got the important part. "So, there is a place where everyone looks more like Mikasa?" Armin summarized.

"Yeah, but we're a bit off-topic," Grice remarked. **"Grisha was kind. That all?"**

"No, he was also an amazing doctor," Armin answered with a smile. "He helped cure a plague that was taking over our hometown. I think that was how he met Eren's mother?"

"No," Mikasa said, pulling her scarf up some. "But it was part of when she started to fall in love with him."

"Grisha's second wife," Grice mused, glancing back to make sure Eren was still preoccupied **. "May I ask, what was she like?"**

"Carla was kind, but very stern. She was never afraid to speak her mind or call out others for being stupid. Eren got a lot of her temperament," Mikasa recalled fondly.

"Grisha was the passive one with her?" Grice inquired in surprise **. "Huh. Went the other way with Dina."**

"… May we ask what she was like?" Armin asked tentatively.

Grice sighed heavily. **"Dina was a treasure. Never a bad word to say about anyone in the group, she always tried to be the reasonable one, to be the hopeful one. I think she was all that kept Grisha sane some days, living like we were. She was always ready to do anything if it just meant there was hope for our future freedom. Even when she was turned into a Titan… she was smiling for Grisha."**

"Why didn't she change as you did?" Mikasa asked curiously.

Grice sighed once more and shook his head. **"I suppose it doesn't matter now. Dina was of royal blood, descended from some relative of that Frieda lady who didn't go here with the Coward King. We hoped that with her blood, we could take back the Founder. Back before we knew about the Curse. We didn't… want to risk losing that, and neither did she."**

Mikasa and Armin went silent, having no idea what to say exactly.

"Is your name… just Grice?" Armin asked after a moment of silence.

Grice didn't answer for an instant before shaking his head in bemusement **. "Everyone always just called me Grice, like I just called Grisha "Yeager." I think I almost forgot that was my family name,"** he mused to himself. **"My name is Gander Grice. But just call me Grice."**

"Right," Armin accepted.

"You seemed surprised that Grisha was more…"passive" as you said in the walls. Was he different out there?" Mikasa questioned.

"Very. He was a doctor, true, but he always had a pit of rage and anger reserved for Marley and all they took from him, from all of us," Grice answered fondly. **"Out of everyone, it felt like he was the most desperate to win sometimes."**

Mikasa frowned in thought. She always thought that Eren took more after his mother, but given everything she was learning, it didn't seem that simple anymore. Grisha had once been just like Eren was, railing against his situation in life. And both ended up with this strange power. Maybe that was why Grisha gave Eren this power, knowing he could handle it.

But why not say anything? What happened to him? From Frieda's tale, it didn't sound like he had been on the brink of death. And more importantly, how did he change back into human form? Not counting the first transformation Grice had mentioned many of the Restorationists experiencing, Grisha had transformed back twice: once to infiltrate the walls and once after… killing the royal family.

They were interrupted from their musing by the rumbling that came with Eren's feet.

[[[[Where's Ymir?]]]]

"Waiting on that girl that can, apparently, understand monster," Grice answered casually.

Eren nodded absently before turning to Mikasa and Armin.

[[[Anything interesting happen?]]]]

Grice made to translate until Armin answered. "No, not really. Just talking."

Grice looked between them in bewilderment **. "Okay, can *they* understand you too…?"**

"No, but we can guess what Eren means a lot of the time," Mikasa explained.

"That's impressive. And kind of endearing, I guess," Grice said. **"So, somewhat related to your father, have you always been able to shoot lightning from your mouth?"**

[[No, that is new.]]

[It feels amazing though.]

[[[Did Dad have that?]]]

"Not before he went in the walls, no," Grice answered. **"Though…"**

"What is it?" Mikasa spoke up with a head tilt.

"It might be my memories turning to shite after everything, but I swear there was a time when Grisha only had one tail," Grice remarked thoughtfully, looking up at Eren **. "And unless I'm wrong, you're a bit taller than he was."**

[[[Why though?]]]

[[Can't be time. Dad was in this form for Months.]]

[Maybe something to do with Frieda?]

"I'm lost now, what's he saying?" Armin asked curiously.

"Trying to figure out why his form is changing more than it did for Grisha," Grice translated, thoughtful as well.

Armin frowned. "There was… something I noticed, during the battle," Armin remarked, getting their full attention. "Right after your heads regrew, when you were fighting Reiner? I know you don't remember much, but you had him pinned and biting him. But your necks were glowing, almost as if you were… taking something from him."

Grice gave strange clicking sounds of contemplation while Eren became incredibly quiet and thoughtful.

They were talking about when Eren wasn't himself. When the Voice in the Storm had been in control. Just what had it been doing, Zwei wondered but didn't dare muse on it out loud.

The Storm wanted to kill the Titans, the same as him. But it didn't care for humans, so it obviously wanted to end the Titans for a different reason.

If Grice had any thoughts on Armin's observation, he didn't share them either.

Meanwhile

Bertholt was screwed.

He knew that from the moment he woke up in a cell, laid against a wall with his arms chained above his head and his legs similarly bound to the floor.

What happened, he wasn't sure. He remembered the lighting from Eren's mouth, then falling and…

Everything after that might have been a nightmare. Surrounded by Eren, the Jaw Titan, and… whoever or whatever the monster calling them "Dogs of Marley" was.

Then a woman was behind him, touching his back, and… nothing.

Either that all happened or he had passed out when he hit the ground. It didn't matter either way, he was captured and definitely did not have the strength to transform.

How did it turn out like this? He didn't enjoy being the Colossal Titan, but he still felt like its power was almost invincible. How had he been defeated? What was this power that Eren had? And how many more were there like him? Why now, after a hundred years since the Fall of Eldia to Marley?

"Hello, Mr. Hoover."

His thoughts were cut short by the disturbingly pleasant tone of a woman.

He looked up and saw that there were four people just outside his cell, two men and two women. One he recognized as Captain Levi of the Scouts, eyeing him as if he were a wounded yet dangerous beast to be put down. One of the women he didn't recall the name of, just that she was someone else high in the Survey Corps. She was grinning at him, and he wasn't sure if that was scarier than Levi. The man with a hat was unknown to him, but despite looking amused and relaxed, Bertholt could tell he was dangerous.

And last but not least, Lady Frieda, sitting on a crate for a rest, smiling at him with feigned benevolence.

"I take it you know who I am?" Freida asked idly.

"Lady Freida, a noble within the walls," he answered evenly, trying to keep himself collected and not freak out.

"Yes, that is what everyone was told," she agreed with a nod, resting her chin in her hand. "But is that all you think I am?"

The memory of her touching his back flashed in his mind, with the strange, numbing shock that he barely recalled now. "No, I suppose I don't, Queen of the Walls."

Freida chuckled. "Good, that saves us some explanations."

"What do you want? Why am I alive?" Bertholt asked with a frown.

"We can change that pretty quickly if you want," Levi warned coldly.

"Easy, Runt. Don't want to make him piss his pants, do ya?" Kenny asked with a chuckle, getting a sideway glare from Levi.

"Boys, play nice," Freida requested in jest before returning to Bertholt. "I just thought we should have a chat while you're still in one piece."

Bertholt stiffened at that.

"Oh? What do you mean, O Queenly One?" Hange asked with excited interest.

"Shifters can survive and recover from almost anything if they have the will and know-how. But this is a double edge sword. A Shifter can't change form while doing significant healing. Say, regrowing a limb. But you have to be careful; if they're already healed before the limb is cut off, they can transform. The trick is that they have to be already healing to cancel out the transformation," Frieda explained helpfully. "As the Founding Titan, however, I was able to shut down his ability to shift at all for twenty-four hours. He can still heal though."

"Ahh, I see, so we need to keep his powers… occupied before that timer expires," Hange said with a devious gleam against her goggles.

Bertholt mentally cursed these horrible devils, knowing he was going to be in hell before long. "What Do You Want?" he demanded again.

Freida lost her smile, giving him a narrow look. "Why are you here?"

"…?" Bertholt couldn't look more confused if he tried.

"Sorry, I should be specific. I know you're here for the Founder. AKA, Me. But I'm not sure why Marley is doing it now of all times. So enlighten me. What is the official reason for your mission here?" she asked curiously.

Bertholt debated not answering. But the answer wouldn't help them against Marley. It was hardly a secret either, it was actually kind of obvious. "To take the Founder and finally end the threat you and this island pose to the rest of the world," he answered without much conviction. "I'm sure there were other reasons for the higher-ups, but for us? We were just… trying to save the world.

Levi rose an eyebrow. "You bastards use Titans, and you're saying the world is that scared of us?" he asked skeptically.

"As far as the world is concerned, we still can control Titans," Kenny reminded, shaking his head. "Still, yeah, definitely just some noble shit dumped over their real reasons."

Bertholt didn't argue. Ulterior motive or not, it didn't change the fact that the whole world lived in fear of the idea of the Rumbling. Taking the Founder, ending that hundred-year-long fear? There had to be something right in doing that if there was nothing else right in this cruel world.

But even with that answer, Freida only looked curious. "That's all?" she asked in thought. When Bertholt had no further answer, she hummed. "I suppose that's good. I was almost worried for a second."

Now Bertholt felt something crawling up his spine, a sense of suspicion and dread. "What are you talking about?"

Freida hummed. "Things are going on beyond Marley's understanding. And as you have plainly seen, there are greater things in the world than Titans."

Three sets of roars echoed in his ears. "You think Eren will be enough to take on the entire world?"

"The entire world?" Freida repeated with a glare, standing abruptly. "Bertholt Hoover, you have no idea what the world even is, let alone the whole of it."

With that rather ominous statement, they left the Shifter in a deep sense of dread and uncertainty.

It wasn't until they were up the stairs that Hange commented. "So, what exactly were you planning to learn from that?" Hange asked curiously

Freida turned to her, her ire still present from Bertholt's words, for some reason. "Marley hasn't found the Lake of Death yet."

That had their attention. "How do you figure?" Levi inquired.

"Eren Yeager was about a decade old when Wall Maria fell," Kenny reminded, leaning against the wall. "Grisha didn't seduce a lass and put a bun in her right away. It's been a long while since Grice's people were put on this island. Between what that kid said and how much of a surprise old Golden boy was for them?"

"I see," Hange said in understanding. "If they had found it, they probably would have found a way to force a transformation. And with the way everyone talks about Marley, they wouldn't hesitate to use that."

"Couldn't they have found it while the brats were here?" Levi suggested.

"If they had something like Eren or Grice, I'm sure they would have sent them as backup, given how much they fear the Founder," Freida remarked.

"You say that like you're not the Founder," Levi pointed out suspiciously.

"I am, but I'm far from what I could do," Freida mused, touching her scarred arm. "I haven't been able to transform since that night I fought Grisha. But it's best if they don't know that. Otherwise, Marley might just try to attack us head-on and attempt to kill everyone on this island."

"… Everyone?" Levi repeated with a frown. "Would they go that far?"

Frieda nodded slowly. "My time before I was crippled was like a blur. But I could… learn about the outside world through the Founder's connection to all Subjects of Ymir. And what I saw was… horrible."

Levi kept his gaze on her until Kenny cleared his throat. "These Marley bastards, that turn people into Titans to wander forever or just as canon fodder? According to Freida, they're one of the nicer places."

Levi's eyes widen minutely before his mouth set into a scowl. "So, us against the world?"

"No," Frieda said with a mysterious smile. "In that situation, it'd just be us fighting the rest of humankind."

Just the rest of humanity. That felt ominous to Levi.

Meanwhile

Annie lay motionless on top of Wall Maria. She ran so hard and for so long that her cheeks were gaunt and missing flesh still from where her Titan had been connected to it. Strange, phantom agonies

twitched in her arm every now and then but she was too exhausted to even react to the pain.

"Bertholt isn't coming."

Only her eyes moved as she glanced at Reiner's seated position next to her, glaring north toward Rose. Toward Trost. Toward Eren.

"No shit," she said evenly.

"They know who we are now," Reiner said with a frown.

Annie didn't respond now.

"Rescuing him is going to be hard," Reiner said under his breath.

Annie snorted or tried to, only managing to give herself a cough. "P-Please, don't fucking kid yourself."

Reiner gritted his teeth. "We can't just… go back, failures with the Jaw AND the Colossal lost to the enemies."

Annie frowned, giving him a pointed look. "How did Eren know?"

Reiner paused. "Maybe they told him beforehand?"

Annie looked entirely unimpressed with that answer. "Don't bullshit me. You were looking right at him. He was fine and then suddenly freaked out. He figured it out on his own. How?"

Reiner opened his mouth before looking reluctantly thoughtful. "It wasn't until Ymir showed up. Maybe he can… see or smell our powers?"

"Doesn't matter how he can, just that he can. Eren can tell if someone's a shifter. He might be able to sense us even if we tried to lay low and sneak back in," Annie pointed out.

"So, what? We just leave Bertholt to die!? Go home to be fed to our replacements?!" Reiner asked, unwilling to accept that just yet.

Annie hummed. "I don't think they will. Probably."

Reiner glanced at her, inquiring about her meaning.

"If they believe what we say about these monsters they have, Eren and the other thing? They'll not want to risk passing the powers off to someone inexperienced with such dangers lurking about," Annie speculated. "Of course, they might think we're full of shit and just throw us head first into some sap's Titan mouth."

They sat in silence for a long time.

"What the hell even was that? That thing Eren became?" Reiner asked quietly.

"Hell if I know," Annie muttered, mumbling lifting up her arm. "It still hurts, where he blew my Titan's arm off."

Reiner nodded. "I can feel his fangs in my back still."

"Titans don't feel pain," Annie commented. "I remember that much. The researchers told us, Titans don't have a nervous system like we do. Movement and touch, yeah, but pain and pleasure are things they can't feel."

"Even if they did…" Reiner trailed off. "Why is it still bothering us? We should have healed more by now."

"You know the only reason I'm talking about this, is because I don't have the energy to kick your groin to shut you up, right?" Annie retorted suddenly.

Reienr shook his head. "Fine, I'll change the subject. What do we do?"

"That's a good question, Warriors."

Annie found the will and energy to sit up, looking at the voice in alarm and suspicion, Reiner looking over in disbelief.

There was a man before them with glasses and shaggy blond hair, smoking a cigarette. "It's been a while, Reiner, Annie."

"Zeke…? Is that you, Warchief?" Reiner aksed, wondering if he was dreaming.

Zeke chuckled good-naturedly. "I suppose I've changed a bit. You both look the same to me though, just… bigger."

"How long have you been here?" Annie asked with a frown.

"Right here? I've been walking from down the wall for some time now," he answered, frowning now. "But I landed on the island a few weeks ago with Pieck and some soldiers."

Reiner gripped his head in frustration. "You mean… you've been here this whole time? We could have… Dammit! If we had known, we might have been able to save Bertholt, maybe even win."

"I'm afraid I wouldn't have been of much help," Zeke said with a troubled look on his face.

Annie furrowed her brow. "Zeke, where are Pieck and the others?"

"Pieck is with the survivors, "Zeke said with a frown. "We ran into some… complications."

Reiner and Annie shared a look before giving him uneasy glances. "How many heads did it have?"

Zeke rose an eyebrow. "They only had one head each… but there were a lot of them," Zeke said, taking a drag of his cigarette. "Strange creatures with only two limbs and a tail. They're as big as Titans, but they definitely… aren't."

"There are more of that bastard," Reiner growled.

"It seems we have a lot to share and catch up on. Should I assume… Marcel and Bertholt didn't make it?"

Reiner balled his fists and looked down. "Bertholt was captured, just today. But Marcel…"

"He died before we ever got to the wall," Annie answered flatly. "A buried titan surprised us."

Zeke nodded slowly in understanding. "Come on, we're not safe here."

"Why not?" Annie asked in confusion.

"These… Crawlers?" Zeke said slowly. "They sometimes come up on the walls, looking around for food. And I'm sorry to say, you both look like easy prey for them."

That gave them both a renewed sense of dread, forcing them to gingerly get to their feet and ignore any protests their bodies made.

Zeke nodded to them, and the trio began to walk in silence.

"So… tell me, do you know anything about these things, by chance?" Zeke asked idly.

"No," Reiner answered. "But there is… something worse than them."

"Oh?" Zeke asked, glancing back with a scowl.

"Warcheif," Annie said with a pursed frown. "Does the name Eren Yaeger mean anything to you?"

Zeke suddenly stopped at the mention of his surname, turning to face them suspiciously. "I don't recall a relative going by that. May I ask what that name means to you?"

Right now, Eren's name only meant one thing to Annie and Reiner.

Pain

End of Chapter

There we go. Grice has some interesting talks, Freida gets some information out of Bertholt without him realizing it, and Zeke has shown up! But yeah, the rest of the Crawlers have been terrorizing Zeke and the rest of the reinforcements.

Honestly, most Crawlers are easier to kill than titans, but they very smart pretators and humans in this world aren't use to fighting intellegent monsters, the Nine Shifters aside.

Again, yes, might be putting this fic on hold in the next few month until the next Monsterverse movie. Can I ignore it? Oh, certainly. But I like the option to incorperate it if I want to.

Regardless, I hope you all enjoy this all the same.

Early viewing of chapters 26-27 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 26

God of Hate

NOTE: Decided that, yes, this fic will be going on a hiatus until the new Godzilla-Kong movie comes out. However, dont worry, there are still two more updates for this chapter before that happens. But on that note.

POLL voting on my profile to see what AoT fic people want to see updated most beisdes this one. Honestly, I could do any of them, but I was curious how the vote would turn out.

After that, everything took on a momentum of its own. Or that was how it looked to everyone outside the know.

Frieda took her leave, and in less than a week, a great many things were announced.

King Niwit Fritz had "officially" stepped down as King of the Walls, the official report being that his old age had caught up with him and impeded his duties. This made way for Frieda Fritz to openly take the throne. She had discarded the name of Riess, and everyone had easily accepted the story of the Riess family being another line of Fritz.

Between her ascension and tales of Monsters fighting Titans, and humans that could become Titans? Scarcely anyone had noticed that several other nobles or important figures had been summarily replaced. And the few that did notice either didn't care enough to do anything or were pleased by the event. The government hadn't endeared many people to it, so the change was treated either apathetically or optimistically.

Which was how the current situation had developed.

"By Order of Frieda Fritz II, Queen of Eldia, the district of Trost is to be repurposed into a military area to house and coordinate with our giant allies, designated collectively as the RUTOs, "Riesen Unbekannter Terrestrisch Organismus"(Giant Unidentified Terrestrial Organisms). However, anyone wishing to enter the city to attempt to salvage from their homes will be allowed to do so within the hours between noon and four, for two weeks time."

Armin watched from the side as Rico finished reading aloud the declaration to the gathered crowd before handing the large parchment to a soldier, who hammered it to a post.

Naturally, he could see that many were nervous about going inside the city with the giant creatures still within. He couldn't blame them, but precautions had been taken. Grice was away for now, and Eren was staying near the boulder while people were in the city. So problems should be contained just to accidents by either damaged houses or human stupidity.

"Damn, this is all so weird," Jean said with a sigh as the gate to Trost was open, and a few brave souls ventured inside. "I feel like we're part of a cover-up and only know half the story."

"More like undoing a cover-up, I think," Armin mused. "Did you notice what she called Eren and Grice?"

"Yeah. Rutos. Surprised they didn't just call them Titan-Killers or something," Jean mused.

"Yes, but giving them a collective name when there are only two of them so far?" Armin said with a frown. "I think they're expecting more to show up, possibly stay here as well."

"I don't know how many can fit in a district without getting cramped," Jean remarked with an uneasy look. "But you really think so?"

"Grice said his comrades are still out there. And it's possible there are more besides them," Armin answered. "Of course…"

"Of course, what?" Jean asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Nothing, never mind," Armin waved off sheepishly.

Jean looked unconvinced but didn't press on it.

Armin looked ahead with a look of deep thought. Frieda knew more about this than she told, he was sure. Just what could she be hiding…?

"Riesenwache Artlert!" Rico called out.

"Here, Ma'am!" Armin answered as he headed over to her.

"This is the group for Backerin Street," Rico answered, motioning to several civilians. "You know the drill. Escort them to their homes, assure them they won't be harmed, don't let them run off to get a look at Yeager or Grice, and use a flare if there's an emergency situation."

Armin nodded, looking at the group. "If you'll all follow me, please."

"Also, Artlert, where is Ackerman?" Rico questioned, barely hiding her exasperation.

"Well, if she's not here, I would assume either keeping an eye on Sasha or keeping Eren company," Armin answered with a shrug.

"If you see her, send her this way, we could use more escorts," Rico instructed simply, getting a nod of understanding before the blonde headed off. "Okay, next group…"

Meanwhile

Riesenwache. Giant Guard or Giant Watch.

Mikasa wasn't sure which was more fitting.

It was a new, special designation given to those who were assigned to the RUTO district. A formal title for what she and her fellow graduates had been doing for a while now, keeping watch over Eren and acting as a buffer between him and people who might not be able to accept a creature like him as an ally.

The only difference was that now extended to Grice as well.

A familiar, soft growl invaded her ears and elicited a smile from her face. She was sitting upon the boulder, and Eren had been laying around it for a nap. "Sleep well, Eren?"

He rolled his eyes at her, and she caught his meaning without the need for translation. He slept too much. There wasn't much he could do with people coming into Trost to collect what they managed to salvage from their homes. If he went anywhere or did much, he'd probably just scare the civilians half to death.

"Don't worry, it's only another hour," Mikasa reminded, which did nothing to elevate Eren's mood.

"Oh, you shouldn't ruin your beautiful visage with such a nasty look, Eren."

All three of Eren's heads almost looked relieved by the arrival of the ever-eccentric Hange, landing on the ground nearby.

"Section Commander," Mikasa greeted politely, less enthusiastic about her arrival.

"You know, you would be calling me Riesen Captain or Riesen Commander, but someone vetoed that," Hange said, giving Eren an accusing look.

Eren gave her a pointed look and snapped one of his tails against the ground.

"Oh, will you stop! I don't have many plans to be poking near your anal cavity!" Hange defended with a huff.

"Implying that you do have some plans," Mikasa pointed out, Eren looking entirely validated in his action.

"Unrelated, would you mind standing up for a moment, Eren?" Hange requested with a curious look.

The three heads looked at each other. Eins was skeptical and annoyed, Zwei's skepticism was bordering on disbelief, and Drei was eyeing Hange for any hidden equipment. Despite that, he ultimately did as she requested, rising to his feet and standing near his full height.

"Huh. It seems like you finally stopped getting bigger," Hange observed, cupping her chin. "You were about twenty meters just after the scouts returned. Now you're nearly thirty meters tall. Everything else grew too. Four more meters to the necks, five to the tails. Your foot looks like it's big enough to step on a five-meter Titan completely."

"Best not to tell Ymir that," Mikasa commented as she came down to join the scientist. "But do you think he'll keep getting bigger?"

"Probably. But it doesn't seem to be growth based on time alone. Perhaps fighting causes it? Or killing Titans?" Hange proposed.

Stronger with every Titan he killed… Eren liked the thought of that.

It showed, given Mikasa even looked at him. "If so, there is hardly anyone better for this power," Mikasa said with a frown. "But if he gets too big…"

"Yeah, yeah, that'll be a problem," Hange agreed, glancing at the boulder that blocked the breach. It'd be a tight fit for Eren, but he should manage. But if his growth continued, well, it'd be another story.

"Heretics!"

The trio turned to see a man across the bridge leading to the boulder. Beneath his disheveled cloak, it was easy to see the medallion of the Church of the Wall.

"Blasphemous demons! Look at how you have desecrated the Walls!" he accused angrily, motioning to not only the boulder but the many cracks and marks in the Wall. Some were from where the Colossal Titan fell, but most were from where Grice had been climbing up and down the walls. "You will all burn before the wrath of the Goddesses for defiling their sacred gift!"

"Huh, one of them slipped in," Hange mused as the man continued to ramble.

Eren's middle head yawned, utterly uninterested in the drivel they were hearing.

"I'll take care of him," Mikasa offered, as she walked forward.

"What's all the yelling about?"

The Wallist gave a start at the loud voice, causing him to back away from the deep trench. Out from the gap crawled a very sleepy Grice, cracking several of his joints as he rose up, the zealot falling back in fear.

"Morning, Eren. Mikasa. Giant-fetishist," Grice greeted.

"Ahh, thank you. And it's past noon, by the way," Hange informed with a smile, Eren crooning his agreement.

"Really? Damn, I slept good down here," he said, shaking the cobwebs out of his head, turning to face the source of the yelling, now whimpering and sputtering. **"Who the hell is this?"**

"Just one of the Wallists," Mikasa answered idly.

"Wallists?" Grice questioned.

"Oh, just some crazy folks that worship the Walls," Hange explained with a chuckle.

Grice stared for a moment. **"You're joking, right?"** he asked, turning to face the terrified man **. "She's joking, right?"**

"T-the demon speaks! Yo-you won't trick me, foul beast! My faith is strong! The power of the Goddesses Maria, Rose, and Sina will protect me!" he cried out, sounding like he was trying to convince himself.

"What? Goddesses? You…" Grice shook his head in disbelief. **"You don't even know what those names mean, do you?"**

"Silence your lies! They are the names of the Goddesses who made the sacred walls!" the believer declared, trying to rise to his feet and stand tall by his belief.

"Daughters of a Goddess, if that," Grice retorted with a headshake. **"Such a weird thing to keep, those three names."**

"This part of Eldia's past and culture?" Mikasa asked, Eren's heads leaning forth with mild interest as well.

"I'll explain, right after we escort this dumbass out. Would one of you ladies mind accompanying me?" Grice requested.

"Accompany? Grice, people are still going around looking for their possessions," Mikasa pointed out. "You'll terrify them."

"Yeah, well, might as well as give people a live show of us big bad monsters being decent people. And I think I have a better shot right now, being able to talk," Grice reasoned.

"From what I've heard, being able to talk might not have helped Eren here," Hange said with a chuckle.

"Eren speaks his mind a lot," Mikasa summarized vaguely.

"…" Grice looked to Eren and seemed to understand **. "Ahh. I see."**

Mikasa blinked as Eren's leftmost head nudged her forward. "You want me to go with them?" she asked curiously, causing him to nod toward the interior meaningfully. "Oh. You want me to see how Armin and the others are doing, and if they need my help."

Eren nodded firmly.

In resignation, Mikasa went to follow after Grice, grabbing the Wallist roughly as she forcefully led him away under protest.

"My, it's adorable how you two seem to keep trading being the responsible one," Hange said teasingly.

Eren snorted but didn't deign to try and convey more of a retort.

"Ohh, don't be like that. You love having me around," Hange said with certainty.

Eins looked away in refusal to acknowledge her claim, Zwei couldn't give a negative yet would not confirm it, and Drei had a sheepish look about him.

"So, Eren," Hange said, her tone losing its humor and drawing his attention in full. "Has everything been alright, since you fought Reiner and the others?"

Physically, he was fine and they both knew it. Mentally, he was okay enough. Or as okay as he could be with three heads. But emotionally…?

"Some of your friends were in shock, even denial for days afterward," Hange said in sympathy. "I understand you were… close to them all in some way."

Eren nodded solemnly, wrathfully, bitterly. Reiner, who was like a brother to everyone. Annie, who helped teach him how to fight. Bertholt, the gentle giant one couldn't help but befriend.

At that moment he realized that their auras were the same as Ymir, and what that meant… Drei wanted to deny it, defy his very sight and mind. He didn't want it to be true. Zwei had tried hard, so hard to think of another answer, any explanation for what he had seen. But Eins? That head didn't really remember thinking at all. Just rage, and wrath, and fury.

But the moment he looked at Reiner, and saw the look settle in his eyes, Eren knew… knew it was truth. And in that instant, there was a strange, hateful clarity that consumed him for the rest of the battle.

That was gone now. All he was left with was rage he couldn't express, the sadness he refused to dwell on, and the implications their betrayal with what he understood after learning the truth of the outside world.

"Have you talked with anyone? Mikasa? Armin? Just Krista or even Grice?" Hange asked in concern.

He answered, but Hange couldn't understand him. Eren was too distracted to try and convey the answer more clearly and Hange felt it best not to push it more.

"I won't… pretend I know what you're going through exactly," Hange said with a soft smile. "But I get what it's like to be stabbed in the back. We've had a few people turn craven or sell us out in the past."

That didn't surprise Eren at all. Humans could be terrible creatures, especially in hard times.

"Just…" Hange took a breath. "Remember you got people you can trust, okay? Your friends, obviously. I don't know if I'm on that list, but-"

Eren nodded without thought or hesitation.

"I am?" Hange said, suddenly grinning. "Awww, aren't you sweet, you beautiful bastard."

Drei smiled weakly. Zwei almost did as well. Eins, well, he wasn't frowning or anything.

Hange carefully glanced around before turning serious for a moment. "Eren, do you trust Krista?"

He cocked a head at her, nodding very cautiously. There was a suspicious look in his eyes, as if he knew what she might ask.

Hange's expression became resolved. "Then please, can you tell me what I saw?" Hange asked firmly.

Eren stared, but there was no confusion in his eyes.

"When you were headless and I touched you, I saw… things," Hange said, scowling in frustration as she rubbed her head. "It keeps popping back in every now and then. Like my mind is still processing it, piecing it together. But never enough for me to really… understand."

Eren felt it at the back of his minds.

{{{{… }}}}

Hange had The Storm's attention. Why, he didn't know and wasn't sure he wanted to find out.

Eren snorted, blowing air in Hange's face. She was startled but refocused her attention on the here and now. "Right, sorry, just… should I get Krista or not?" Hange asked awkwardly.

Eren shook his head slowly, deliberately.

"Oh. Umm, alright," Hange said feeling like the situation became more ominous than it needed to be. "Another time?"

Eren nodded and watched her leave, knowing she was on edge. His baleful eyes looked downward, at his shadow.

In his eyes, it looked bigger than it should.

{{{{…?}}}}

He could feel the almost mocking look of the Storm, despite its silence.

While not tired in the slightest, Eren laid himself down for another nap.

Not that he expected it to be a peaceful one…

His eyes snapped open and he found himself… somewhere else.

He was standing atop a hill. Or a mountain? A pile of dirt and stone either way. It was warm and he could feel it rumbling beneath his feet.

Below was a field filled with small shrubs.

No, wait… those were trees.

How big was he in this dream…?

[[Not a dream.]]

He shook his heads, reminding himself that this wasn't just something he was imagining.

Clouds rolled overhead and lightning thundered in his ears.

Eren still had no idea precisely what this entity in his mind was, or what it wanted. But he had learned several things about it since his

battle against the Shifters.

It could communicate with him but didn't care to. Eren mostly… sensed The Storm's reaction to things. Usually snarling, growling. Sometimes cocking a head in confusion or chortles of mockery. Mostly, he could just tell when it was present and paying active attention to something.

It hated Titans, like him. But only referred to them as maggots.

It didn't care for humans, unlike him.

Lightning crackled in the sky and the battle against the traitors rang in his head.

Unlike him for the most part.

It was also very much aware of everything Eren did, and probably more. Eren could sense annoyance and sadistic amusement from The Storm at random times, for no apparent reason.

And, lastly, Eren could see its memories.

At first, Eren thought this was a connection to the Titan Shifters. After all, Ymir and Frieda had informed them about Shifters inheriting their predecessor's memories to some extent. But after a while, Eren realized that he wasn't just seeing his father's memories, but ones from long… long before his father was born.

A world without Titans. But a world with other giant monsters.

Eren wasn't even sure humanity existed in those memories.

{{{{Ahead}}}}

Eren started, following the directions of the Voice of the Storm.

On the horizon came a massive figure. It walked on four legs, clawed in the front, and hooved in the back. It was grey, save on its green

back. It took Eren a moment to realize the backside of this creature was actually covered in trees, enough for a small forest. The large skull was reptilian but flatter than Eren's. Its ancient eyes were white and pupil-less, its teeth sharp, and long horns curled down and inward on both sides of the skull.

Just by how it walked, Eren knew this beast was already ancient.

It looked up at Eren, at the Storm, but paid them little mind as it found a spot to its liking. Once it did, it began to lay down and burrow itself into the ground, before settling into a deep sleep.

[[[What is that?]]]

[Who cares?]

[[Why are we watching this?]]

{{{{... }}}}

Eren looked up at the clouds, despising the Voice of the Storm and its vague silence.

[[[[What do you want with Hange?]]]]

The clouds and winds spun in front of him, taking on the likeness of Hange, her voice echoing on the gales: "I saw… things."

Eren stared for a moment before it clicked.

[[[You want to know what she saw?]]]

[[Which means… you don't know.]]

[And that pisses you off.]

Thunder rumbled overhead as an answer.

[[[[What could she have seen?]]]]

There was silence. No wind, no thunder, not even the beating of his own massive heart.

Then, he heard it.

Something… pulsing, something rhythmic.

And the tingle up his spine and necks that something dangerous was approaching.

Eren turned, to the other side of the mountain.

He could see the ocean and the sandy shores. Something he longed to see, dreamed to see.

But he noticed none of that.

All he could focus on was the glowing, pulsating light of blue that was swimming across the sea, like a blade striking through the waves.

A blade that could strike the heavens themselves.

Drei opened his eye.

And was staring right at Connie.

As in, Connie's face was less than a foot from his eyeball!

All three heads jerked up in surprise, Connie falling on his ass in surprise.

"Hehe, you had something stuck on your eyelid. I was trying to get it off. I swear!" Connie explained quickly.

Eren wasn't sure if that was a dumb lie or just something Connie had been dumb enough to do.

"Eren! You're finally awake!" Sasha greeted, hanging upside down on the wall by her ODM gear. "Don't worry, we definitely didn't have our lunch on your heads!"

Connie seemed to forget that Eren had three heads, and was perfectly capable to to give Sasha a deadpan look while seeing him giving a neck-cutting gesture to stop talking.

These two were good soldiers, it was easy to see how they survived against the Titans. How they survived in daily life, he wasn't so sure about.

"I told you idiots not to eat on him."

Eren cocked his head up to see Jean leaning on the boulder with an exasperated look.

"You slept through the excitement for once," Jean muttered.

[[Excitement?]]

[[[What did we miss?]]]

[Who's the idiot this time?]

Jean didn't even bother trying to figure out what Eren was saying, just assuming he wanted more information. "Grice freaked everyone out by going to the gate. Rico looked ready to have an aneurysm until, well…"

"You should have seen it, Eren," Sasha said with a chuckle. "Some little girl went up and hugged his leg! It was cute."

Eren quirked his heads. Well, Grice probably handled that better than he would have.

"He handled it better than you would have," Jean said, annoying Eren with the unintentional agreement. "Managed to softly shoe her back to her mother without making it look scary. Well, scarier."

People were warming up to them. That was interesting. And almost too good to be true.

"Someone else tried to cause trouble though," Connie commented.

Ahh, and suddenly the world felt right again to Eins and Zwei, while Drei was a bit disappointed. But why was Connie still smiling?

"Oh, he means the idiot that tried to throw rocks at Grice," Sasha said with a laugh.

Even Jean looked like he might laugh. Which was rare, his horse face was not prone to laughter.

"You've seen his skull, right? Harder than this boulder, I'm sure," Jean remarked, rapping his knuckles on the stone. "Everything bounced off him, and Grice just pretended to barely notice. Everyone else started laughing until they gave up."

Eren chuckled, all three heads. He wondered what was weirder for these three. The strange sound that passed for his laughter now, or that it came in three-as-one.

But either way, they didn't seem to mind.

For right now, this was good enough for him.

Meanwhile

Having headed out for a snack, Grice lurked about a forest as he traveled outside Wall Rose. Against Pure Titans, he didn't really need to be sneaky. But Pure Titans weren't what concerned him.

A smell entered his nose, and he could taste it on his tongue.

Blood, and it wasn't human.

He moved as quietly and quickly as he could until he reached the edge of the forest. He stopped, scanning the area for any obvious

enemies. Slowly, he moved out, watching for any hints of a trap. He had doubts there was one, but he didn't survive everything just to get cocky.

He came to a stop as he looked down sorrowfully at what he found.

It was another Crawler, another member of the Restoration movement. Who, he couldn't tell, but they were one of his precious comrades all the same. They were covered in bullet wounds, but those had only been an annoyance by the looks of things.

One arm was torn off. Not bitten or gnawed off, he knew that well enough. They had crawled here too. He looked up and saw the blood trail, soaking the grown and leading far away toward Wall Maria.

"The Dogs are on the hunt."

End of Chapter

So, yeah, Ghidorah is getting more active in Eren's head, and there is now a fourth small military group for keeping watch over the giants. Also, instaed of MUTOs, giant monsters are called RUTOs. Yeah, MUTO isn't suppsoe to be a species name, its suppose to be a short name for Massive Unidentified Terrestial Organism.

Besides all that, yeah, this fic will be put on hold for a bit in the near future. You can expect it to return after the new movie comes out in March. Sorry if that disappoints anyone, but it is a temporary thing.

Early viewing of chapters 27-28 avaliable on my pat-reon:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 27

God of Hate

"You truly don't remember me at all?" Frieda asked, disappointed and sad.

"I'm… sorry, but no? " Krista… or rather, Historia answered honestly, if not fairly confused.

"Well, that's annoying," Kenny said with a grumble.

"I'm sorry, but… when exactly did we meet? I don't remember an older sister or anyone else on the farm?" Historia asked, bewildered but wanting to have some answers.

Frieda's face twisted at that. "I… erased your memories, with the Founder."

Historia stared, unblinking. "I… you… what?"

"Yeah, one of the weirder things it could do back in the day," Kenny said idly. "Anyone that can get turned into a Titan, the founder can control. Even make them forget things, or remembers things that didn't happen."

"Just like how the first King of the Walls erased our memories of the outside world," Historia recalled in a mumble. It was one thing to hear about such a power, it was another to know it was used on herself. "But why though? Did you tell me something important?"

"No. I just… didn't want to put you in danger, but I was selfish and wanted to see you too. I hated leaving you with that woman, but with the Vow and everything else… my mind was a mess at the best of times," Frieda explained with a sigh. "I'm not trying to excuse it. I had a good intention behind a very jumbled reasoning."

"And Kenny sending me off to the military?" Historia asked dubiously. "What was the point of that?"

"Frieda was in a coma by then," Kenny interjected. "I just did damage control in the meantime."

Historia frowned, unsure if they were telling the truth but no way to be sure what, if anything, was a lie.

"I know it's asking a lot, but may I try to…?" Frieda requested, taking a hobbled step towards her half-sister.

While reluctant in the extreme to allow someone to literally mess with her mind, Historia still did have the strangest gut feeling she could trust this woman. Not to mention, she wanted to know as well. She nodded stiffly while allowing her to approach.

Frieda placed her good hand on Historia's head, gentle and soft-

{{{{Maggot Queen.}}}}

-and redrew her hand, clutching at her scarred arm with a look of pain on her face, her eyes glowing softly for a brief second.

"Frieda?" Kenny called in concern as he took a step closer.

"What's wrong? What happened?" Historia asked, feeling an electric chill down her spine.

Frieda grunted, closing her eyes in agony before taking a deep breath as the sensation subsided. "I just thought it was the royal blood, I thought that was why you could hear him," Frieda whispered, more to herself than to Historia. "Eren. Did he try to… eat you?"

Historia blinked at that. "No, but he did… catch me in his mouth."

Kenny raised an eyebrow at that. "Well, I suppose without any arms…"

"I don't understand. What does that have to do with anything?" Historia asked curiously.

Frieda grunted, leaning on her cane. "I'm guessing that the same power that tried to take the Founder from me is also… affecting you, shall we say."

"What do you mean?" Historia asked with a furrowed brow.

Frieda had a strange look in her eye as if she was looking past Historia, not seeing her at all before her eyes refocused. "I mean that, in effect, you're cut off from the Founder. What that entails, I don't know entirely, beyond the fact that I can't give you back your memories."

Historia could only stare awkwardly before she found her resolve. "You're not telling everything you know about this, are you?"

Kenny had a neutral poker face while Frieda smiled. "You're very perspective, Historia. Or, perhaps, Eren was the one who noticed?"

"Does it really matter?" Historia asked with annoyance. "I think everyone is assuming you're holding something back. Something important."

"Something that I can't reveal yet. Because there are already enough revelations and problems to deal with," Frieda admitted and explained in the same breath. "You are right though. There are matters at hand that predate Eldia and Ymir's titans."

"And the people of the Walls don't even know what Eldia was, let alone imagine something before it," Historia said in bitter understanding.

"There is… something I feel the need to tell you about. After a talk with Hange, I realized that Ymir didn't reveal an important part about the Nine," Frieda said with a solemn, apologetic look.

"Why would she still be keeping secrets?" Historia asked, confused and almost angry now.

"I imagine she is trying to figure out how to tell you. Don't be too upset with her, it is rather hard to accept for herself, I imagine," Frieda cautioned sympathetically.

Historia suddenly felt a pit in her stomach, as if she knew this would not be a pleasant secret to know.

"There is a Curse on all Titan Shifters…"

End Flashback

Despite everything, Eren did not have many bitter feelings towards Ymir.

That said, he wasn't exactly her friend. Besides a few barbs and greetings, they had rarely ever spoken much at all during their years of training.

But it was still a little hard to ignore her sitting on the side of a roof as he walked passed.

[[[That is not sitting, that is moping.]]]

[That's depression.]

[[Yes, she is sad, obviously!]]

Ymir glanced up with a frown, watching the three heads argue with one another. "How the hell can you squabble with yourself that much? What, not have enough brain cells to share between each head?"

[Bitch.]

[[[She's lashing out to feel better.]]]

[[Rather poorly at that.]]

[Still a bitch.]

Seeing Eren's unimpressed stare, Ymir grunted. "Guess I might as well tell you. I'm sure Kr-Historia will if I don't, "she muttered bitterly, perhaps even enviously.

Eren stepped closer to the shifter, leaning down his heads to her level on the roof. He found that made it less awkward, sometimes, if someone didn't become terrified of his maws.

Ymir ran a head through her hair, looking slightly unkempt with ends sticking out.

"I'm going to die."

All three heads jerked slightly, sharing a glance before looking at her with interest, alarm, and concern.

"It's something I left out about Shifters. I… didn't want her to know yet. I didn't want to have to drop that on her in the middle of everything else," Ymir rambled in regret. "All of us, the Nine? Being a Shifter comes with a cost. The Curse of Ymir, ironically. Once you obtain the power, it will kill you in thirteen years."

Eren stood silently, taking in that information.

[[… She became a shifter when the Wall was breached.]]

[…]

[[[… !?]]]

[[[[She only has eight years left. Reiner and the others must have even less.]]]]

Ymir snorted. "I'm just going to assume you did the math and figured out how long I got left. I… After the hell of being a Pure Titan, I didn't

mind having an expiration date. Just as long as I could spend it how I want. That this life would be mine. And I would be…"

[[[[Free.]]]]

Eren's six eyes glimmered with understanding and sympathy for her. They were similar, the both of them, with the desire to live as they pleased. Suddenly, Ymir and her actions made more sense to Eren.

"I'm not asking for a pity party," Ymir said firmly, holding her forehead. "I just… need to get that off my chest. Historia is pissed since… let's be honest, this isn't the biggest secret, but it is probably… the most important one, from me to her. And I kept it from her. I want to make things right with her. I can't bare the idea of dying and leaving her wearing such a bitter face because I fucked things up again."

On some level, Eren didn't like how much he could relate to that sentiment. The idea of leaving Mikasa, tears staining her face and scarf…

Still, he nodded and gave a chortle of encouragement to her.

"… Thanks," Ymir said idly. "If there's one thing I like about this shitshow is that I know she's safe after I bite the dust. Being able to translate for you and being the Queen's sister makes her too valuable to risk stupidly. Not to mention, well, you're you."

Eins eyed her pointedly, very sure that she was referring to his personality and not his form.

"So… I can't believe I'm asking this, but…" Ymir paused with a smirk. "Did she taste good?"

Eren refused to react to that question at all, merely staring at her while trying not to think about it.

"Asking him implies you don't know yourself."

Both glanced up, seeing Levi standing on a chimney of the house.

"Eavesdropping like a creep, Shrimp?" Ymir asked with a small smirk.

"You know, since you can regenerate, I'm more inclined to dismember you," Levi commented idly. "Come on, we have a situation. Head to the east side, you'll find Erwin and the others there."

With that, he took off, leaving a confused and grim pair.

"Mind if I hitch a ride?" Ymir requested. "I promise not to bite this time."

Eins growled, Zwei glared, and Drei rolled his eyes, jerking his head for her to get on.

"You really are the softy of the three," Ymir teased as she jumped on Drei's head, holding onto the horns for safety

It was a short walk for Eren, following the streets nearest the walls. Eventually, they came to a large group of soldiers, mainly scouts, forming a semi-circle parameter next to the wall.

"Eren, Ymir, it's good you both arrived," Erwin called out from the rooftop nearby, Historia standing near him with Hange.

Ymir jumped off to join them, the air awkward between her and the blonde girl. "Historia…"

"Later, something big is going on," Historia said firmly.

"Right," Ymir accepted resignedly.

Ignoring the drama before him, Erwin addressed the shifter and the dragon. "Grice reported that he's found many of his comrades dead and dying. He's brought back a corpse to the wall and is dragging it up from the other side."

"That's morbid as fuck," Ymir mused, glancing at Hange. "I'm guessing this is so she can study them, but if it's a corpse-?"

"We're all here in case it happens to be alive, or can regenerate like Eren did," Erwin explained. "As much as it would be beneficial to have another RUTO among us, Grice was not optimistic about them retaining their minds."

Eren nodded. Basically, he was here to put down a potential threat if it arouse. It made a painful amount of sense, not expecting or relying on Grice to be able to do the deed if needed.

There was a hissing roar from high up, drawing everyone's attention to the sight of Grice on top of the wall with the ragged body of another creature that looked just like himself. Grice seemed to hesitate for a moment, placing the body on the wall rather than dropping it.

"What's he doing?" Historia wondered aloud, squinting up at the sight.

"Checking to make sure he's really dead," Levi answered idly, a knowing look on his face.

With a frustrated screech of anger and sorrow, Grice pushed the body over the side, letting it fall. The soldiers all moved and scattered to make sure they weren't close to the impact sight, the corpse's tail partially crushing a house while the main part of the body fell into the street.

Everyone watched for a tense moment as the body remained unmoving, not so much as a twitch. The silence was broken in by the sound of claws against stone as Grice slid down walls, more harshly than normal. **"Here, four-eyes. I'm sure you're dying to get your hands on this,"** Grice snapped towards Hange as he stalked angrily about.

"I prefer my specimens alive, Grice," Hange said in sympathy as the Crawler moved towards them.

Grice grunted, taking a loud and raspy breath to calm his nerves. **"It looks like my old comrades still hate Marley as much as they ever did."**

"They're attacking the Shifters?" Erwin specified.

"And whoever else they brought with them," Grice said, nodding to the body. **"I've been finding a few bodies like this. They were definitely shot at by guns, among other things."**

Eren frowned as his heads studied the corpse. It was like Grice, but with many tiny marks where the bullets had embedded into the skin. Most didn't draw much blood. But the chest was caved-in, as if crushed. Zwei narrowed his gaze, seeing some stones embedded in the wound.

"Have you found any alive?" Ymir asked with a frown.

Grice tensed and growled **. "Just one. She tried to eat me before I had to put her down."**

Everyone wisely didn't touch that topic again.

[[[[Shouldn't we consider heading out there if they're attacking Reiner, Annie, and their allies?]]]]

Everyone waited as Krista relayed the message.

"Brat, I know you were fresh out of training, but you know getting everything ready for an expedition isn't easy," Levi pointed out dryly.

Erwin said nothing, and that was telling.

"Eren has a damn good point though," Grice said with a hissing growl **. "If the Dogs and their handlers survive my comrades, they'll be able to hunker down and plan for when we come."**

"You say that as if you know where they are," Hange remarked with a raised eyebrow.

"Shinganshina."

No one missed the rumbling in Eren's three throats as Erwin said the name of his hometown.

"If there are humans and supplies with them, the only way to get them safely inside the walls would be through the breach," Erwin deduced. "Annie and Reiner also know it's where our goal ultimately lies. If they set a trap, it will be there."

Eren turned to Grice with a thoughtful look. Could they do it on their own? Grice didn't have the same endurance as him, but he could still take on the Shifters easily. According to everything they knew, Marley had seven of the Nine. They had captured Bertholdt and Ymir was on their side, but Reiner and Annie would definitely be there. The Warhammer probably wouldn't leave Marley with how secretive it was. That left the Beast and the Cart. And whatever other reinforcements they had.

Eren knew he was powerful, but Bertholdt proved he wasn't invincible. He'd gladly kill every enemy before him, but Zwei was smart enough to keep the three heads from collectively running into such an unknown situation.

Not to mention…

[[[The basement.]]]

No one took much notice of this grunt, for not all of Eren's noises were words. Grice pretended he heard nothing while Krista quietly relayed it to Erwin.

The blond commander cupped his chin. Yes, that was another thing Erwin had to consider. Grisha had left… something in his basement; something for Eren to find.

What it was, not even Eren could guess anymore. But if it related to this power and form Grisha had passed onto Eren, it wasn't an appealing idea to let Marley potentially stumble across it.

"Commander Erwin," Grice spoke up, looking up at the sky with a thoughtful look. **"I do know where some of my more-sane comrades are."**

"Is there a reason you haven't contacted them already?" Erwin asked skeptically.

"Because of the less-sane comrades," Grice answered with a hissing sigh. **"I didn't want to lead the ones mad with hunger to them. But with this all going on…"**

"You want to gather them for an attack on our enemies," Erwin deduced.

"Or to at least bring them here. Some of them were hibernating, like I was, and would be sitting ducks for the dogs," Grice explained.

[[It's a good idea.]]

[[[The more on our side, the better.]]]

[And we'll get to take the fight to Marley.]

All three heads turned to Erwin with a final question. Historia looked over her shoulder at Erwin as she summarized. "He wants to know what the plan is, Commander?"

"You're both getting ahead of yourselves," Levi said, raising an eyebrow at Erwin. "Aren't they, Commander?"

"Grice, how is the Titan situation outside the breach?" Erwin asked stoically.

"Between me and my comrades eating them, and the Marlayeans drawing some towards them? It's very light," Grice explained, liking where this was going.

"Then perhaps an expedition is in order," Erwin reasoned, glancing back to Levi. "We have a chance to either rout our enemies from the wall or get information on their numbers and assets. We need one of these outcomes. But Levi is right; we don't have the resources to issue an expedition or the time to gather the supplies."

"What about just sending us?" Ymir suggested with her arms crossed.

"Eren and Grice, yes. But you will be staying here, Ymir," Erwin explained.

"What? Okay, why me? Cause I think we're past the potential-spy shit," Ymir questioned curiously.

"Because if the enemy captures you, they can retake your power by feeding you to another Titan," Hange reminded with a frown.

With that, Erwin addressed both of the giants. "I need you to listen carefully. This is not a battle or an ambush mission. Your goals are simple. Rally any of Grice's other comrades you can. Survey the situation at Shinganshina. Do not attempt to engage them. We need to take risks, however, you are both our only true advantage against Marley."

If something happened to both of them, the people of the Walls would be at the mercy of Marley's Titans and technology. It went without saying.

"Well, time to practice moving that boulder," Grice remarked, pausing to take one last look at the body of his fallen comrade.

"… What was their name?" Historia asked softly.

"I don't know," Grice answered honestly. **"I know their voices by heart, and I could… smell the difference, I guess, when they were alive. But Crawlers all look mostly the same."**

With that solemn statement, Grice trotted off to the wall, Eren heading after him.

"Eren."

He paused, looking back at Hange, who looked concerned.

"Don't do anything stupid out there, okay?" she asked with a small smile.

Eren snorted three times over before stalking off.

"No promises," Historia translated softly.

"Well, at least the brat is honest and self-aware," Levi said with a head shake. "Erwin, are you sure about this?"

"I'm sure we need to know what is going on beyond Wall Rose," Erwin answered evenly. "Our actions beyond that are uncertain. And as much as I'd prefer sending some backup…"

"Hmm?" Levi quirked an eyebrow at the pause.

"We don't know how to fight something like Grice, or his mindless comrades," Erwin reminded, nodding to the corpse. "If Eren and Grice come in conflict with them, our soldiers would just be liabilities."

Levi hummed but didn't argue that point. "Eren's friends won't be happy about this. Especially Ackerman."

"Speaking of which, where are they?" Hange asked idly, not seeing them around.

"The shift for keeping an eye on Eren was supposed to be Ymir and I," Historia answered with a frown.

"And due to recent events, they decided to give you both space," Erwin said without pause.

Ymir glanced away. "Well, that and they had some meeting with that Rico woman. Something about formalizing schedules or something,"

With the creation of the Riesenwache, it was moving from being an informal group to a recognized subdivision of the military. And while Eren's friends had taken the role fairly seriously before, this now entailed more formality and regulations.

Rico Brzenska had been appointed as a temporary leader of the group. Not officially part of it so much as aiding in organizing it, which was needed since most of the Riesenwache were still fresh cadets.

"Perhaps we shouldn't mention it until after our giants leave," Levi suggested. "Last thing we need is Ackerman trying to tag along with them without permission."

Erwin deeply considered that. "In the meantime, Levi, head to the breach. Send up a black flare if Titans get inside again."

"Right."

Meanwhile, Eren and Grice approached the boulder, eyeing it with some uncertainty. Both for separate reasons.

[[Are you positive there aren't any Titans just outside?]]

"None I can see. Or smell," Grice answered, looking the large stone up and down **. "Look, I know you're crazy strong, but I'm not sure I can push this into the right spot again."**

[[[Never know until we try!]]]

With that, Eren began to push the boulder, pressing his heads against the side, trying to dislodge it from the gap.

"You got it in there real good, eh?" Grice observed with a cocked head.

[Shut the fuck up, or help dammit!]

Just as Eins snapped, the boulder began to nudge and wiggle out of place, chunks of stone falling off the broken hole in the wall. While it took a great deal of strain to move, Eren found it much easier than when he plugged the breach. Once it was dislodged, he carefully rolled it to the side.

"Well, it looks like you should fit," Grice noted as he looked through the opening ***. "Now let's see if I can move this thing."***

Eren watched as the Crawler moved next to the stone and began to push and groan with all his might.

[[Try pushing with your tail.]]

Muttering something dark to himself, Grice nonetheless followed the advice, pushing against the floor with his other appendage. While it wasn't as easy as it was for Eren, he did manage to get it moving.

Eren wisely choose to go through the opening, lest they have to do this a second time. It was just barely big enough for him to fit through. If he got much bigger, this could become a problem.

But as he left the walls of Trost, he paused as he took in the landscape. The lands they had abandoned years ago when Maria fell, the rotting ghost town just beyond Trost. Yes, it was tiny compared to the rest of the world, and yes he had seen it from atop the walls already, but still…

{{{{…?}}}}

It was the first time he had set foot outside Wall Rose since they lost Maria. There was something strangely… satisfying about it.

{{{{… }}}}

Eren was pulled out of his musing as the boulder fell back into place, blocking the way back into Trost. He wasn't too worried about that, he could push it open anytime he wanted. Within a few minutes, Grice came climbing over the top.

"Okay," Grice grunted as he landed next to Eren. **"One of the places we need to visit is on the way to this town of yours. It's one of those Giant Forests this island has."**

Eren cocked his head at that.

[[[[Those rare outside the walls?]]]]

Grice cocked his head. **"I don't know of any that aren't on this island. But that's not important. Once we get there, we should have some backup. Then we head close to the walls and figure out what is going on."**

Eren nodded in agreement. It wasn't much of a plan, but it would work. After all, they were just scouting right now.

But if a clear chance to finish off some of their enemies arose, well…

The Commander did say they needed to take risks sometimes.

Meanwhile

Reiner groaned as he kneeled in Titan form, the tongue of a Crawler still on his fist from when he had ripped it out. The Armor Titan was cracked and crippled.

"They just don't stop," Reiner panted in exhaustion. "How many even are there?"

He had fought off three of them protecting a hideout for the Marleyean soldiers. The other two ran away after he killed this one. They were smart, smarter than the Titans. They rarely tried the same thing twice, they moved alone and in groups, and they mimicked voices.

The Warriors could fend the monsters off, but each time they lost a bit more to them; Supplies, men, hideouts. Sometimes just sleepless nights.

And worst of all…

KsiKsiKsi

Reiner froze at the haunting, hissing chuckle filled the air. He looked over and saw it.

A Crawler, staring directly at him, head poking out from beside a street.

In its mouth was the leg of a soldier. It stood there, slowly and deliberately savoring its meal as Reiner numbly watched.

It wanted him to watch.

Worst of all was how cruel these things could be. It wanted him to know he had failed.

KsiKsiKsi

With a final, sadistic chuckle the Crawler ran off, slipping away.

Reiner felt his body moving in its own accord as he rose in his Titan form, limping forth to look down the street the Crawler had come from.

There was a hole in a wall of a building. It was large, where the snout had basically stabbed into it.

Blood splatter was all over the place. If they hadn't been eaten, they had been crushed by the claws. They had probably called out for him, someone to defend them, but with the three others to battle, he couldn't have heard them.

Reiner wanted to scream, but all he could was numbly stare. "Dammit all…"

End of Chapters

More and mor things are buzzing along. Grice is going to be gathering his saner friends, Eren is ready to fight something, and Ghidorah himself is a constant shadow over everything.

And yeah, Skull Crawlers can be really sadistic creatures when they have to be clever about hunting. And yes, some part of the humans is stil in there, directly that cruel cunning towards the Warriors and Marleyeans.

Anyway, as a reminder, I'm going to be switching to "Eren the Usurper" until the next Monsterverse movie "New Empire" comes out. Got one more chpater to this though before that.

Early viewing of chapters 28 avaliable on my pat-reon, and Chapter 2 of Eren the Usurper:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64

Chapter 28

God of Hate Chapter 28

AN This will be the last chapter for a several months, as I'm waiting to see Monsterverses "New Empire" movie in April before continuing. Not to mention "Minus One" is coming soon. In the mean time, I'm switching to "Eren the Usurper." Don't worry, I will return to this fic when the new movie comes out.

"What!?"

Hange flinched back as Mikasa slammed her hands on the table.

"You sent Eren and Grice outside the walls, alone?" Mikasa asked darkly.

"Yes, but not for an attack or anything!" Hange promised quickly before turning calm and serious. "There's been a development. Grice says his comrades, the ones mad from starvation? They're attacking the Shifters and their allies."

Jean furrowed his brow skeptically. "You sent Eren Yeager out on a scouting mission. You do realize that blockhead is just as likely to just try and take the fight to them."

Hange sighed. "We're aware of Eren's temperament, but we didn't have any options. It was either send them or do nothing."

"Why not just send Grice?" Armin asked curiously. "Isn't that what he has been doing for us anyway?"

"That is true," Hange admitted, fully aware that Mikasa's gaze was still displeased, if not outright pissed. "But several of the Crawlers have died. Eren, however, is much harder to kill. In the absolute worst-case scenario, we know he is almost guaranteed to make it back to Trost with the information."

"Wait, so… Eren is Grice's backup, basically?" Connie summarized.

"That's one way of putting it," Hange mused. "Trust me; this isn't how we wanted to do things. Commander Erwin's plans were to set out with Grice and Eren on the next Expedition. But this isn't something we can afford to ignore."

"She's right," Armin agreed, putting a hand on Mikasa's shoulder. "If they have a chance to bunker down, they'll be more likely to have a trap waiting for us."

Mikasa said nothing, taking a breath before turning to leave the room. Armin watched her leave in concern.

"Was there anything else, Section Commander?" Marco asked politely.

"No, no. You obviously don't have any giants to watch, so take this time to relax and recuperate, maybe help get your schedules in order. I heard you were still dealing with that," Hange offered. "That'll be all, we'll alert you when they've returned."

"Ma'am," Armin said with a nod as Hange left.

"I don't like this," Jean muttered with a frown.

"What, you worried about Eren too?" Connie asked in surprise.

"Not about that idiot," Jean grunted, rubbing his head. "Before it was bad enough against just Titans, but we might have to fight things like Eren and Grice, not to mention whatever weapons the people from outside the Walls have. And we only know how to fight against Titans."

Armin looked down, knowing Jean was right. Humanity within the Walls was largely relying on Eren and Grice now. Against the Shifters, they could adapt and fight, and other humans were simpler to fight against. At least practically, emotionally was another matter.

But the RUTOs were another matter altogether, unknown and unstudied.

Armin's only sense of relief on that front was that Eren's golden reptile form was unique among what the Eldian Restorationists had turned into. Grice was nothing to ignore, but Eren was definitely the more dangerous of the two.

"Maybe they're still figuring it out?" Sasha suggested.

"That's kind of obvious," Connie said with a snort.

"No, you baldy! I mean, maybe they're still figuring out how to use all the information and other stuff the new queen gave away," Sasha pointed out, glaring childishly at Connie.

That was a good point, Armin concluded. Frieda had officially retracted many laws, secret and known, after taking the throne. Technology was no longer being stifled, and everyone in the military had heard rumors about the higher-ups making plans for how to use that for the struggle against the enemies of the walls, human and monster alike. Not to mention whatever information that Frieda was sharing with the brass that could aid them in taking on these new threats.

Still, Armin wasn't all that surprised that Eren had gone off ahead. That was normally like him.

Meanwhile

For all Grice's envy, Eren had to admit that Crawlers were certainly faster at running than he was with his body. He was heavier and with shorter legs, whereas Grice had proportionately longer limbs on a lighter form.

That said…

"GRA!" a Titan grunted out, dying as Grice tore out the nape. The Restorationist rapidly tore off and ate the flesh before it could dissolve, more swallowing than chewing.

[[[[How does that even work? Doesn't it just vanish in your stomach?]]]]

"No idea!" Grice answered, chugging down some arm muscles. **"Maybe I digest it before it can? Maybe eating it stops it from disappearing? I don't really know or care. It keeps me sane, that's the important part."**

Eren couldn't help but feel sorry for Grice, constantly feeling like he was starving, only able to fend it off by eating enough to keep his hunger at bay.

"Eren, we should talk for a bit, now that we're alone," Grice said after scarfing down the last decent-sized bit, turning to face the three heads.

[Now?]

[[[Shouldn't we get going?]]]]

[[Time is of the essence.]]

"I know, but we don't get to be away from prying ears too often," Grice said seriously. **"There was something I didn't tell you about these powers. Partially to keep it from everyone hearing, but also… I'm pretty sure you know about it on some level."**

Eren stared, giving away nothing.

{{{{… }}}}

He wasn't the only one staring now.

Grice hissed in his throat. **"I can smell that. Hear that. Feel that. He's watching from just behind your mind, isn't he?"**

Eren started at that, but the voice of the Storm remained silent. He scowled, giving Grice his full attention.

[[[[What do you know?]]]]

Grice shook his head before looking up at Eren, his body tensing until…

[Eat!Eat!Hungry!Eat!NOTHIM!Heeatus!BUTEAT!Food!]

Eren leaned away as the voice was… emitted from Grice, for lack of a better word. It wasn't actually coming from the Crawler but in his direction.

Grice shuddered, his entire body curling tightly before he relaxed, stretching his jaw open as if yawning. **"That was mine,"** Grice answered simply. **"All he wants is food and not to get killed. As long as I'm doing that, the real Crawler doesn't mind me being in control."**

[[Real Crawler?]]

[What do you mean real?!]

[[[Is that all it thinks about?]]]

"The poor bastard and the rest of his kind are born starving so… yeah, pretty much," Grice answered, sounding almost sympathetic to the creature in his mind as he began to slowly pace a bit. **"While I was sleeping for so long? I began to… see things. Dream things. But they weren't dreams. It took me a long while to understand that. They were memories. Memories of- not someone else, but something else,"** Grice started off ominously **. "Eventually, I had a realization. When I'm starving? I'm not losing control of myself. Something else is taking control."**

[[[[Something?]]]]

Eren's gazes trailed meaningfully over Grice's body.

"Yes, Eren. The REAL Crawler. These forms we have, they have minds of their own. Consciousnesses. They were once alive, a long time ago. But then they died… somehow. Just like how they're somehow back," Grice continued uncertainly.

{{{{… mmm… }}}}

Eren's eyes widen, feeling that noise more than he heard it. Was the Voice of the Storm… pleased for some reason?

[[What do you remember?]]

Grice shook his head. **"The memories are vague and hard to put together still. I remember being like this. I remember my "siblings" trying to eat me. I remember eating some of them, and a lot of other things. I remember… other creatures, things far greater and terrible than what I am. Things that could crush the walls just by walking through them."**

Eren remained silent as he felt a strange tingling down the spines of his necks.

"I just wanted to make sure you know that there is something else in there with you, something that originally had that body. And if you give it a reason, it'll try to take it back," Grice warned.

That one, Eren knew too well, all three sets of eyes glaring out of the corners, aimed at something that wasn't really there.

And something he couldn't truly see met his stare all the same.

{{{{Whelp}}}}

The two traveled in heavy silence after that. There was nothing else to talk about and Eren's mind was still too busy with what Grice had

told him. On some level, yes, he had known everything Grice had told him. But to know someone else was going through it and he wasn't just insane was a relief in its own way.

Despite taking a detour, Eren still had a good view of the area between Trost and Shiganshina, and his new senses told him plainly that there weren't many Titans in the area.

[[[The Scouts will have a much easier time on their next expedition.]]]]

"Hmm?" Grice glanced back as they neared their destination. **"I've heard of that. The soldiers under Erwin are tasked with adventuring out into Titan Country. Is it as grim as it sounds?"**

[[Only half of the new recruits survive their first mission.]]

Grice did something between a grunt and a growl of displeasure. **"When we first planned on coming here ourselves, we thought the Titans were completely under the control of the walls. We had no idea about… any of this."**

[Because we wouldn't be a good scapegoat if everyone knew we were trapped like cattle.]

"Cattle," Grice muttered. **"That's not too dissimilar for us in Marley. I'm pretty sure they only let us live and breed just to have more Titans and Warriors they can unleash."**

The subject was rapidly eating at their patience.

[[[I always thought… the world was this big empty place, some place waiting to be explored.]]]

"It is. If you're not an Eldian," Grice remarked darkly.

[[[[I thought the Titans were the only things between us and freedom.]]]]

Grice hummed in sympathy, knowing that feeling all too well.

{[{[How… disappointing.}]}]

Grice glanced back to Eren. The usual rage was not in his eyes, not even the angry one on the side. Disappointed was the only word to describe that look on his three visages, depressingly so.

He reminded himself that Eren was still young, not even sixteen yet. And everything he thought he knew and dreamed of had been shattered.

"You said we just had to keep moving forward, until our enemies are all gone, right?" Grice reminded carefully. **"So, let's take it just one enemy at a time."**

[[[[… Thank you, Grice]]]]

Grice nodded over his shoulder before they came to a stop. The pair was now at the edge of a giant forest, trees towering over even their massive forms.

[[I imagine you'd make good use of these trees.]]

"You're not wrong," Grice answered as he took a step forward. He inhaled deeply, letting out a massive, screeching roar.

The sound echoed long and deep into the forest, an eerie silence coming after that.

"Get ready. We might have to fight some of the feral ones first," Grice warned as he tensed into a fighting stand.

Eren nodded, eyes scanning for any movement, any sign of life. Eventually, he spotted something.

[[There.]]

Grice glanced at Eren and followed the middle head's gaze, spotting a large shadow slinking through the massive trees.

Eren's eyes went wide as he realized something very, very important.

[[[[That's no Crawler.]]]]

It was too long to be a crawler and the wrong shape.

["Griccce…?"] a voice hissed out from the tree tops. ***["Is that you? And is that Grisssha?"]***

"Boris," Grice called up, relieved to hear a familiar voice. **"It's me, yeah! Come on down, we need to talk."**

The figure didn't move for a moment. ***["Have you eaten, Griccce?"]***

Grice sighed. **"Yes, yes I have, Boris."**

Instantly, Boris shot out of the trees, diving toward Grice. A long, slender body wrapped around the crawler to Eren's alarm. He was about to try and help until…

["Gricccce! Oh, I am so happy to sssssee you!"] Boris cried out, holding his comrade in what was now obviously a hug.

"Boris! Come on! It's good to see you too, but pull yourself together!" Grice called out, sounding less displeased than his words let out.

["Fuck you! Let me enjoy thissss! The last thre of our comrades I've sssseen have tried to eat me!"] Boris yelled as he pulled back.

Eren could only stare at the display, taking in Boris's appearance. He was much like a giant snake. The length between the tail and snout was about the same as the length between Eren's own. But he was not limbless. Rather than arms or legs, he had a set of large,

leathery wings that formed like a crown or mane. But they appeared very strong, having helped Boris in "hugging" Grice.

[[I'm guessing he doesn't have the starving problem?]]

Zwei's voice interrupted the reunion, Boris's head snapping to Eren **.** ***["Grisha? What happened to you? Didn't you only have two heads before?"]***

"It's a long story, Boris," Grice said with a sigh. **"This is Eren Yeager. Grisha's son."**

["… Grisha remarried? How long were we asssssleep?!"] Boris exclaimed in alarm.

"It's been close to two decades since we got to this island, Boris," Grice informed apologetically, climbing out of his coils. **"We don't have a lot of time, so I'll give you the short version."**

Several minutes later, Boris was less confused, but only somewhat **.** **["I see. I think. So I didn't dream up that part about the Owl telling us everyone inside the walls was brainwashed to forget about the outside world,"]** Boris mused absently to himself **. ["But Marley sent the Warrior Unit? Why?"]**

"Hard to guess. The dog we captured either isn't talking or the higher-ups aren't sharing with us since, you know, it's hard to secretly tell us anything. Especially me since everyone can understand me," Grice explained.

["You know, I barely notice anymore that we're speaking in different ways. Or, to be blunt, that I'm growling and roaring while you're talking normal,"] Boris remarked with a head shake *. [So, you want help to survey the situation.]*

[[Yes.]]

[[[Unless I saw wrong, you can fly.]]]

[What the hell even are you?]

Boris looked between the three heads, a bit bewildered.

Grice shook his head. **"You'll get used to it. A bit. And we don't really have a name for what he is."**

["We just call Grice's type Crawlers because, well, you've seen how he can run and climb all over the place, right?"] Boris pointed out.

[[[[Fair enough.]]]]

["Right, so where are we going?"] Boris questioned.

[[Shiganshina, where the breach in the wall is.]]

[[[Grice says they should be there.]]]

[The rest of the Crawlers are giving them hell.]

Boris grimaced. ***["We might have to clear them out if they beat the Marlayans and the Warriors. But if they don't win, they'll likely all be dead."]***

Grice groaned in sympathy. **"Boris, what about the ones you were keeping watch over. Are they still here?"**

["Three of them, yeah. The other two…"] Boris trailed off, glancing away. ***["They're probably the ones attacking at this Shiganshina place."]***

Eren looked at the two with a frown, wondering about a particularly sensitive topic.

[[[[I'm sorry to ask, but do they ever… recover, after losing themselves to the hunger?]]]]

Grice sighed heavily. **"Besides some dying moments of clarity? We've never seen it. Once they fully gave into the Crawler, I wouldn't be surprised if they were mentally consumed somehow."**

Eren nodded in understanding.

[[[Should we wake up the others then?]]]

Grice shook his head. **"We'll get them on the way back. It'll be hard enough for us to be stealthy at all with the three of us."**

A thoughtful rumble was in Eren's throat, but he decided to keep it to himself for now.

They wasted enough time as it was.

Meanwhile

Anyone outside of Paradis would take one look at Mikasa and have the impression of a woman on a widow's watch, staring out to sea while vainly watching for her husband's unlikely return.

Only, she wasn't watching out over a sea, but the wide open landscape just outside Wall Rose. She stood on the walls of Trost, staring at the horizon while fiddling with her scarf, sometimes bringing it up over the bottom of her face. It was an old comfort of hers, a way to drown out her worries and anxious thoughts.

It was funny in a strange way. She had always been faster and stronger than Eren, but he had always been the one running ahead without her or Armin.

But now he was stronger than she could imagine. He wasn't physically human anymore. One day, he could be, Grice had reignited that hope. But right now Eren was mightier than any Titan. But knowing he was powerful didn't ease her worries, didn't make

her feel any less unsettled about being apart from him for so long, with no idea what was happening.

She didn't want much in life; a peaceful life, a life in the Scouts, a life on the streets. She didn't care what kind of life it was, mostly. Just being by Eren's side, going where he went, that was enough. But Eren's eyes had always been looking somewhere far away.

She had heard it all before… obsessive, clingy and unhealthy. She didn't care. Because she didn't have much left in the world, and whatever she did have left, was because of Eren. People who lost nearly everything clung to what they had left, who they had left. That was more natural than anyone could understand unless they'd experienced it.

"Mikasa Ackerman."

She turned to the authoritative voice, the leader of the Scouts. "Commander Erwin, Sir," she greeted while saluting.

"At ease, Cadet," he said with a nod. "I assume you're watching for Eren, and Grice."

The way he said "and Grice" as if it was an afterthought, was far from unintentional.

Still, Mikasa didn't answer him verbally, keeping her face impassive.

"You don't approve of me sending them ahead," Erwin stated knowingly.

Again, Mikasa said nothing as Erwin turned to look out on the vista before them.

"I've read on your file. I understand why you are so protective of him, to an extent," Erwin stated calmly. "Hange was worried you might try to go after them."

If Mikasa could see them at all still, she might have considered it. She didn't say it, but she acknowledged the point.

"That was why I sent them ahead without telling the rest of the Riesenwache," he acknowledged. "I wonder if Eren would have stayed put if I hadn't sent him out with Grice?"

Mikasa looked a bit surprised by that comment.

"Eren, despite everything, has been a good soldier. I would have preferred he not attack the Shifters when he did, but he had no way of knowing we were planning on uncovering and capturing them. Given his situation, his reaction was the correct one," Erwin mused. "But even the best soldiers will have moments when they will act as they feel they need to, even if it goes against the chain of command. To make a decision that, due to the circumstances, they can never truly know the best choice until after the fact."

Mikasa frowned in thought. Would Eren have gone off, even without permission? Despite how impulsive he could be, Eren normally followed military orders well. But this was a rare situation. Their enemies were fighting another force, the mindless Crawlers that had been Grice's fellow Restorationists. Could Eren let that moment go?

"It was the right decision," Erwin stated. "Sending them out to investigate. And without any supplies or support, you would only become a liability when your gas and blades ran out."

Mikasa sighed heavily. "Did you come here to ask me something, Commander?"

"Hange could use some help. She's testing how durable a Crawler is," Erwin explained as he glanced at her. "Perhaps it will occupy your mind better than watching the landscape. And, perhaps, it will aid us in not all falling behind Eren and Grice, should they need assistance one day."

Mikasa stared for a moment. "Very well, Commander."

With that, she turned and left, leaping off the wall without hesitation.

Erwin watched her leave with some amusement. "She reminds me of Levi."

Meanwhile

Boris soared high overhead, the dusk of day fading away, and the darkness obscuring his form against the sky.

Finding Shiganshina wasn't too hard. He just had to find the wall, and then follow it until he found the outskirt the walls formed around the settlement.

It helped that blood was in the air; the blood of humans, yes, but also the blood of Crawlers, mingling with the stench of Titans.

He could see the crawlers, four of them at least, lurking just outside the walls. Crawlers, True Crawlers, were not mindless. They were cunning. They were no doubt looking for a new place to attack.

A red flare was shot down from the walls. The Crawlers looked up at the sound and sight, one of them leaping up the wall to eat the flare.

Gunfire ran from some sort of machine gun, the Crawler screaming in rage and pain as it tried to get away, but the humans kept their target in sight.

Crawlers were very tough in the skulls, and their hides were thick, but a concentrated fire of this gun did break through the skin and savage the internal organs.

However, the other three were already racing up the walls to feast on the small prey.

Boris felt the air grow heavy and thick, just before a lightning bolt rang down from the sky, hitting the wall. There, near the gunners, stood a Titan; a very female looking Titan.

The flying giant snarled to himself as he watched the Female Titan fighting the crawlers off. As long as she was careful, she could kick or throw them off before they got a hold of her. The fall wouldn't kill them, but it might dissuade them from trying again.

He was almost tempted to help his old comrades, maybe knock her off the top of the wall. But he held back as a strange whistling sound grew in the air.

His eyes wide, Boris barely dived out of the way as large rocks ripped through the sky.

["They must have seen me fly in when she transformed,"] he realized in displeasure, looking back towards the town and trying to see who or what had been trying to attack him.

There was another Titan. It was hard to make out from this far up. It was strangely shaped, with arms too long, and… was that fur on its body?

He dodged again as another round of rocks came his way, one or two nipping his wings. He winced and hissed, but was glad to see he wasn't crashing. Still, he made to fly higher and return to Eren and Grice.

End of Chapter

If you don't know what Boris is, he's a Warbat from Godzilla Vs Kong.

And yeah, all Kaiju-Shifters have the minds of the actual Kaiju in there. So when the Crawlers go insane from hunger, its really just the Real Crawler taking back over. Beyond that, everyone musing on the current and changing situation.

Hope you all enjoyed this. I'm sorry if the wait disappoints you all. Trust me, I wrestled back and forth quit a bit before deciding to give this fic a break and wait to see the new movie.

Until then!

Early viewing of chapters 2-3 of Eren the Usurper:

p a treon . com (slash) akumakami64